

UKTP Programme Empowers Sri Lanka's Organic Exports



The UK Trade Partnership Programme project in Sri Lanka, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom and implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC), aims to promote exports by facilitating access to markets, providing technical advisory services to SMEs, and strengthening business support organizations.

The recently concluded training and validation workshop, conducted by the United Kingdom

Trade Partnerships (UKTP) Programme from March 18th to March 22nd, 2024, has emerged as a trigger for Sri Lanka's organic export growth. This timely initiative, organized in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the National Organic Control Unit (NOCU) of the Export Development Board (EDB), and the International Trade Centre (ITC), has attracted significant attention for its role in strengthening Sri Lanka's position in the global organic market.

This workshop provided a vital platform for matching Sri Lanka's organic standards with internationally recognized benchmarks. The Mayacert (Pvt) Ltd, a registered certification body in Sri Lanka facilitated the workshop by exploring the key organic standards and regulations such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the Great Britain (GB) organic regulations. Through interactive sessions and practical activities, participants gained insights into certification processes, empowering them to meet global market requirements with confidence.

Following the training workshop, the “public-private stakeholders validation workshop on the assessment of the Sri Lankan organic standard against the IFOAM and Great Britain’s organic regulation” took place on March 21, 2024, at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Colombo. The event brought together key stakeholders in the organic value chain from the public and private sectors.

The series of in-person and hybrid events demonstrated the high interest of key stakeholders from the public and private sectors in enhancing organic agriculture in Sri Lanka as an untapped niche export to the UK and the EU as the priority target markets. The IFOAM international standard and Great Britain’s organic regulation were selected as the national and international organic benchmark requirements for the Sri Lankan organic standard and control system development and harmonization.

The conducted workshop, a testament to the UKTP Programme's dedication to promoting sustainable partnerships and driving economic growth, has received praise for its significant outcomes. By encouraging collaboration and knowledge-sharing, the program not only empowered local stakeholders but also strengthened Sri Lanka's position in the competitive global organic market landscape. With improved capabilities and alignment with international standards, Sri Lanka is ready to seize emerging opportunities and strengthen its reputation as a leading exporter of high-quality organic products.

The participation of Mr. Andrew Patrick, the British High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, undoubtedly added a significant shine to the event."Our analysis indicates that Sri Lanka could significantly benefit from the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), particularly in sectors such as organic products. We understand that tariffs are not the only barrier to export, which is why we're collaborating with the International Trade Centre (ITC) to bolster the technical skills of the industry, enabling them to access and thrive in the UK market. We provide this through the UK Trade Partnerships (UKTP) program. This includes targeted assistance for SMEs across various agricultural value chains, facilitated by the ITC. Through this program, SMEs receive trade promotion technical assistance, enhancing their competitiveness and facilitating entry into new export markets, including the UK." said H.E. Andrew Patrick, British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

The EDB Chairman, Dr. Kingsley Bernard, addressed the event, emphasizing its importance in achieving the objective of comparing and identifying gaps between Sri Lankan standards and international benchmarks. He stressed that this process provided a crucial opportunity for stakeholders, including institutions, the exporting community, and associations, to take effective measures to bridge these gaps. Additionally, Dr. Bernard highlighted the importance of utilizing the newfound knowledge as a comparative advantage to enhance Sri Lanka's competitiveness in the global marketplace.

As the workshops draw to a close, participants emerge empowered and ready to propel Sri Lanka's organic exports to new heights. The empowering initiatives of the UKTP Programme pave the way for a brighter future, where Sri Lanka's organic sector flourishes on the global stage, contributing to economic prosperity and sustainability in the region.

The event featured a variety of resource personnel including Mr. Simon Heisig: Export Quality Management Officer, Ms. Udval Badamkhatan, of the International Trade Centre, Dr. Shaikh Tanveer, Mr. Tom Nizet representing ITC Team of Experts, organic sector stakeholders representing the exporters, processors, farmers and certification bodies; officials from the relevant government institutions representing Sri Lanka Accreditation Board, Sri Lanka Standards Institution, Department of Agriculture, Industrial Technology Institute and the Export Development Board.

