

HORTINVEST PROJECT

SUPPORTING FARMER'S INCOME AND VALUE ADDITION IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Investing in Horticulture (HortInvest) Project works to strengthen the development of fruit, vegetable and potato value chains in Rwanda; from production to consumption.

The project is designed to benefit 44,000 farmers in six districts of Karongi, Muhanga, Ngororero, Nyabihu, Rubavu and Rutsiro.

Funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands in Kigali,

HortInvest supports the mission of Rwanda National Horticulture Policy of accelerating economic growth and reducing poverty and malnutrition.

The project is implemented by a consortium led by Netherlands Development Organization (SNV). Other partners include Sustainable Trade Initiative, Wageningen University and Research, Agriterra, and Holland Greentech.



IMPACT AREAS

HortInvest has four main impact areas:



Improve market-led fruit and vegetable value chains for domestic and regional markets.



Enhance food and nutrition security of households with fruit and vegetables



Develop supply chain for export of high value fruit and vegetables



Create an enabling environment for commercial horticulture sector development.

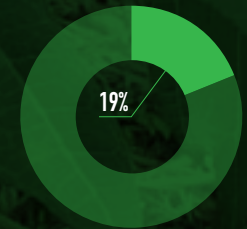
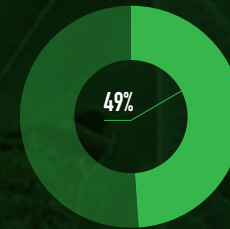
Through its activities, HortInvest stimulates the inclusion of farmers, cooperatives and companies in fruit and vegetable value chains that target domestic and export markets. The project works directly with 250 cooperatives, farmer groups and over 30 SMEs involved in horticulture through its grants and advisory services. It has so far benefited 36,000 farmers of which 49% are women and 17% youth, over the past four years.

In order to increase availability of fruit and vegetables to poorer households, the project has established more than 3,000 kitchen gardens in the program districts. The project has created several inspiring examples of success in terms of value addition and profitability of SMEs as well as increased income for individual farmers.



THE PROJECT WORKS DIRECTLY WITH 250 COOPERATIVES, FARMER GROUPS AND OVER 30 SMEs INVOLVED IN HORTICULTURE ITS GRANTS AND ADVISORY SERVICES.

IT HAS SO FAR BENEFITED 36,000 FARMERS OF WHICH 49% ARE WOMEN AND 17% YOUTH, OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.



Six cases cited below illustrate this success:

DEMONSTRATION FARMS

Demonstration farms serve to showcase new varieties and technologies. They therefore promote wider uptake of economically viable and environmentally sustainable innovations. HortInvest has supported over 790 demonstration farms in the six districts of its operation. This created a conducive environment for peer-to-peer learning, copying and crowding-in of good agriculture practices in the neighbourhoods. More farmers are now joining fruit and vegetables farming business after realising that there is a steady demand and economic gains.

Emmanuel and Beatrice Tuyisenge are from Karongi and Nyabihu district respectively and

have been growing passion fruit on a commercial scale. Beatrice testifies: "I started growing passion fruit for home consumption. I never thought about it as a business before. I now have regular income, thanks to the knowledge acquired and sales to local and in DR Congo markets."

Emmanuel says: "Being a member of a cooperative that specialises in passion fruit production has helped me to expand land from 5 ares to 1.5 ha as I am now getting market for my fresh produce. I am thankful for the trainings and business-to-business sessions supported by HortInvest project linking farmers to input suppliers, buyers, and processors".





COOPERATIVE MODEL KEY TO PROSPERITY FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

“Working together brings greater good for all. We have experienced that it is better to work with each other instead of working against each other. Ever since we started working with HortInvest things have much improved. All members moved from category 1 of Ubudehe to category 2 and there is no more malnutrition among us.” The Chairman: Umurimo w’umwuga cooperative

Umurimo w’umwuga cooperative started in 2014 as a farmer group with 12 members in Rutsiro district. In 2018, the group was included in the HortInvest portfolio and processed its legal registration. In addition to soft skills, HortInvest supported the cooperative to establish a common nursery for vegetables, where members and other vegetable

farmers in their vicinity can buy seedlings from the cooperative. “2019 was the best year in the history of our cooperative,” says the chairman.

“We established a shade net at our farm and received various trainings, including good agricultural practices on different vegetable crops. We reached a record net profit of RWF1,100,000 that year thanks to the good agricultural practices we adopted, and the market linkages made through this partnership. We are now growing vegetables and fruits professionally and we increased area cultivated from 2 ares in 2014 to 3 Ha (leased land) in 2021”. The cooperative has also experienced that the quality of their products has significantly improved and they are now able to work with an exporter for the first time.



FRUIT TREE PLANTATIONS

HortInvest Project promoted home gardens enhancing activities including fruit trees. The project baseline survey of 2018 showed that vitamin A rich food sources and overall fruit and vegetable consumption were lacking in household diets.

Since 2020, the project supported the local governments’ initiative in promoting the fruit trees among poor households, and community mobilization for home gardens in Karongi, Rutsiro, Muhanga, Ngororero, Rubavu and Nyabihu. The fruit trees include avocado, papaya, tree tomato, pension fruit, mango, and orange.

Under the project, 30,537 households have benefited with each planting at least 3 fruit trees. This will enable beneficiary households to increase fruit production for domestic consumption thereby enhancing access to better nutrition. HortInvest is monitoring the fruit trees planted by the farmers and providing any advisory support needed through its district offices and support from local government officials.



BANANA CHIPS PROJECT IN NYABIHU

Nyabihu is one of the major banana producing districts in Rwanda. A youth-led agri-enterprise in the area, ZEAN Ltd, came up with the idea of processing locally produced bananas into value added products. The Company got support from HortInvest Project’s investment and innovation fund on a co-funding basis.

To reduce post-harvest losses and increase farmer’s income, the company has established a banana chips factory

that has a processing capacity of 1.2 tons of chips a day from 8 tons fresh bananas.

In a bid to improve production of banana in the district, the company also introduced a high yielding variety (PHIA17) through a new macropropagation technology. In parallel, farmers have been trained on good agricultural practices and the company has supported rehabilitation existing low yield plantations.





MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ORGANIC FERTILIZER

With headquarters in Oslo, Norway, Envirom Group has established its presence in Rwanda. Envirom delivers environmentally friendly plant growth biostimulants (CBX) to agricultural crops. CBX restore nature's balance in soil and water without the need for adding environmentally damaging ingredients.

"Our product is based on a naturally occurring mineral called Leonardite, a high carbon, plant-based mineral that is available in many parts of the world. Leonardite is currently being imported from the United States of America and the rest of processing activities including packaging take place at our processing facility in Masoro" says Steven Mupende, the Managing Director – Envirom Holding Rwanda.

Daniel Nkuzinka, is a farmer in Nyabihu who has been

trained by HortInvest in collaboration with Envirom on the use of CBX. After applying CBX in his small farm, Daniel was amazed by the increase in his production that went up three-fold.

"I am very happy that now in Rwanda we have such a nice and high performing organic fertilizer (CBX). With my 11 years of experience in potato farming, this is my very first time to harvest more than 8 MT on my 0.27 ha. Moreover, due to the high quality of my produce, I have been able to attract new clients such as Winnaz and I have been able to sell them at slightly higher price compared to my fellow farmers. I therefore encourage my fellow farmers to use CBX because it is very good, and I assure them that they will never be disappointed with it". Says Daniel

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROCESSING BY NEZERWA PLUS AND COOPEDUSH

Nezerwa Plus Ltd, is a local agro-processing company based in Muhanga. The company has been supported by HortInvest under its innovation fund component to contribute towards the reduction of post-harvest losses, create employment and provide nutritious fruit drinks to the local population in a cost effective way.

The company started processing fruit juice mainly passion fruit, pineapple and mixed fruit squash. Later the company also added mixed jam and rhubarb jam in its product portfolio.

The company has been able to recover from COVID-19 impacts on sales as the production has increased by four times in 2021 compared to 2020.

"Thanks to the support from SNV-HortInvest, we have been able to strengthen our operations and we are now sourcing products from cooperatives in Muhanga, Ngororero and Nyabihu districts. Moreover, we have introduced a new product of carrot juice and created employment for youth" Says Rachel Uwayo, the MD of Nezerwa Plus Ltd.



COOPEDUSH

Coopedush is a cooperative based in Karongi district. It started agro-processing in 2010 after finding it hard to get a market for its member's fresh fruit produce.

COOPEDUSH currently produces juice and jam from passion fruit, pineapple, and strawberry. The cooperative started its collaboration with HortInvest from 2020 and it has since been able to increase area of fruit production from 6.5 ha to 13 ha, increased cooperative members from 7 to 24, expanded its factory and created additional jobs. From 2021, COOPEDUSH has also started selling the self-produced high yield variety of fresh strawberry and the strawberry juice and jam along with its earlier established product portfolio of pineapple and passion fruit juice.

"With the new variety got from HortInvest, farmers harvest twice a week in a period of up to three years. We are currently producing over 1,300 litres of juice from strawberry per month selling one litre at Rwf 3,000 for concentrated juice. We also produce 30 Kg of jam per week. Moreover, we are outsourcing at least 300 Kg of strawberry in Rutsiro district from KOABUNYA to produce juice and jam and the demand for both fresh and processed strawberry is huge.

This has increased revenue for our cooperative and farmers we are sourcing from, and our company plans to further expand the area under strawberry cultivation" says Emmanuel MPORWIKI, cooperative Manager.

