



ENHANCING SWEET POTATO COMMERCIALIZATION IN THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

Despite its favourable climate and good soils, which allow for food production all year round, the Kingdom of Eswatini is a net importer of nearly all crops and livestock. In the face of rising food prices and climate change, the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini is focused on addressing the lack of food self-sufficiency and high import bill. Promoting crop diversification and commercialization of smallholder agriculture is one of the strategies the Government is taking. This project aimed to enhance food, nutrition and livelihoods security among farmers and farmers' groups by enhancing the volume and increasing the marketing of commercially produced sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes were selected because they are easy to grow, require few inputs and tend to be relatively drought resistant. In addition, many smallholders were also already growing the crop and processing groups could be easily established.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

By strengthening farmers' capacity to plan production and meet quality and quantity requirements, the project aimed to provide opportunities for farmers to produce for fresh markets and supply processing plants. A total of 27 extension officers were trained on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for sweet potato production and extended the GAP training to 316 smallholder farmers. Through the project, 130 producers were trained in marketing, product quality and food safety. A product development activity was successfully carried out for value-added products from sweet potato tubers, and supplies increased, although expected levels of increased production volume were not met. Awareness raising activities, including the promotion of sweet potato products to approximately 2 500 people during a food expo in 2016, helped increase the overall acceptance of sweet potato as a diversification crop, as well as a high quality consumer product. Six sweet potato processing groups were formed to produce sweet potato flour, as well as baked goods, and were provided with equipment and machinery to begin activities.

IMPACT

The project supported the development of the sweet potato value chain, as well as domestic and export markets for value-added products. The increase in supply from farmers helped support small-scale farmers' livelihoods and subsistence and raised farmer incomes. The establishment of women's baking groups at the community level not only presents an opportunity for income generation for the women, but also provides a market for sweet potato tuber producers. The assessment of the suitability of local varieties to produce sweet potato flour and by-products was carried out, and the establishment of multiplication schemes will further help commercialization efforts in the future and potential export market expansion, which can reduce the country's dependence on foreign imports and improve food security. Enhanced capacity of extension officers and training for smallholders on GAP will also support sustainable agricultural production beyond the life of the project.

KEY FACTS

Contribution
USD 300 000

Duration
August 2015 – December 2017

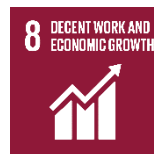
Resource Partner
FAO

Partners
Ministry of Agriculture; National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard); Swaziland Farmer's Cooperative Union Limited (SWAFUCU)

Beneficiaries
Smallholder farmers and farmer organizations in selected pilot zones; Government ministries and extension officers; Public institutions and agencies involved in food and nutrition security

ACTIVITIES

- Market opportunities for sweet potatoes identified and smallholder producers supported to link to markets.
- Protocols on value added activities for sweet potatoes developed and implemented.
- Market analysis carried out to ascertain existing potential sweet potato demand in the Kingdom of Eswatini .
- Food expo held to raise consumer awareness and promote the utilization of sweet potato.
- Suitable varieties of sweet potatoes selected and sustainable multiplication schemes established.
- Training and capacity development for extension officers and smallholder producers on GAP.



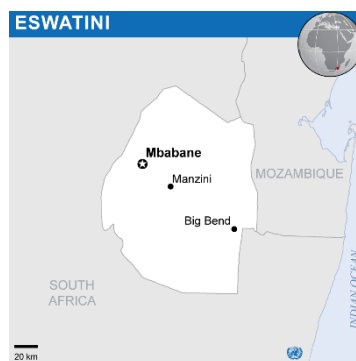
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Project Code
TCP/SWA/3503

Project Title
Support to the commercialisation of sweet potato production in Swaziland

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