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Sierra Leone
Competitiveness
Enhancement Project
(SLCOMP) through
productivity improvement
and trade compliance for
selected value chains



SLCOMP Introduction

Sierra Leone has an economy that relies heavily on agriculture. Its contribution to GDP is approximately 71.1% (2016 estimate), employing approximately 61.1% (2014) of the population. Agricultural development is a priority for the country, considering that it has the potential for bringing sustained macroeconomic growth and economic development, and it contributes towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2: No poverty and Zero hunger. In particular, crops such as cassava, cocoa and palm oil are known to have great export potential and involve many households.

Sierra Leone as a Member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union (MRU) is regionally integrated and could take advantage of these agreements for increasing trade. However, weak trade policy, poor awareness and lack of technical competences hinder the country from taking advantage of the already realized trade openness.

Selected Value Chains



CASSAVA



COCOA



PALM OIL

Selected processes



The project focus will be on interventions for the development and enhanced competitiveness for cocoa, cassava and palm oil with strong potential for regional and global value chains, job creation and growth through regional value chain linkages. However, a market driven and flexible approach will be embedded in the project interventions such that other value chains can benefit from the project activities and outputs. The targeting of the selected product lines is consistent with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regional industrialisation priorities for agro-industries. In particular, this initiative is in line with the value-added transformation of local raw materials, increasing the industrial sector's percentage of the GDP, contributing to increasing the share of industrial products in regional trade and the drive to increase industrial products from West Africa to the world market. The Ministries in charge of Trade, Industry and Agriculture are working to increase the competitiveness of enterprises to add value and find new markets for farm products, to ensure diversification of economic activities and avoid falling in to the trap of an exclusively mineral based economy. Ensuring equal access of female and male entrepreneurs to the benefits of this national policy will be key for its success. The following are the project overall and specific objectives.

Overall Objective

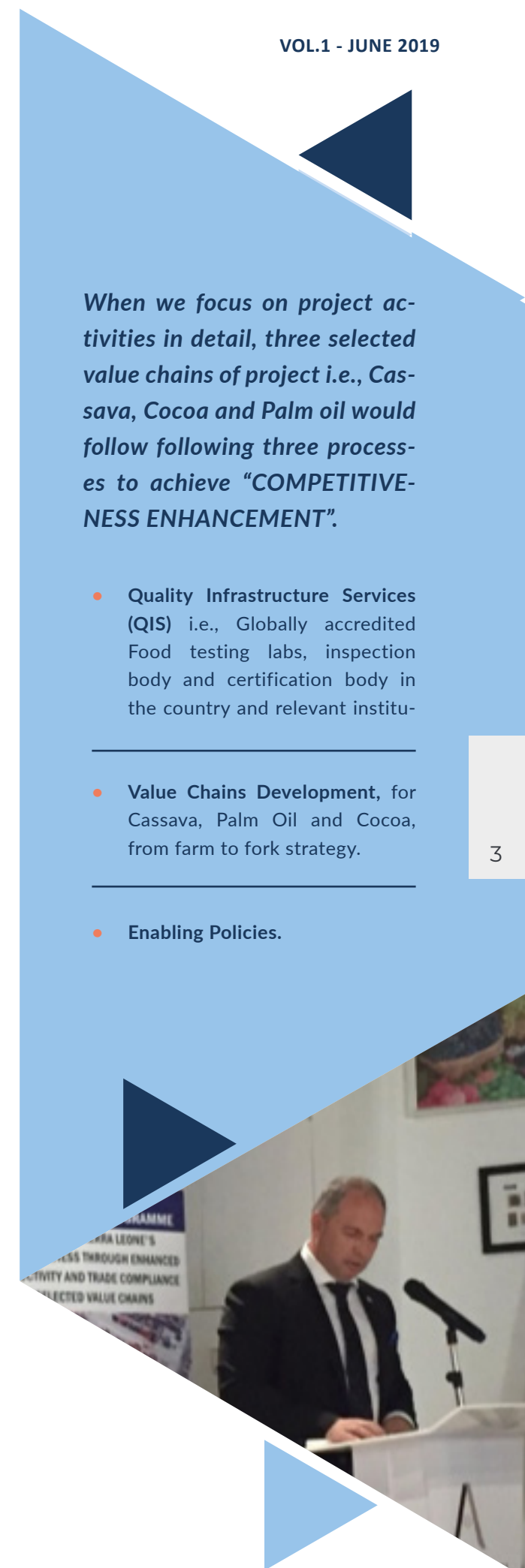
To strengthen the competitiveness of Sierra Leone and enhance its integration into the regional and international trading systems.

Specific Objectives

1. To improve the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of cassava, cocoa and palm oil value chains
2. To improve the climate for business at national level

When we focus on project activities in detail, three selected value chains of project i.e., Cassava, Cocoa and Palm oil would follow following three processes to achieve "COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCEMENT".

- **Quality Infrastructure Services (QIS)** i.e., Globally accredited Food testing labs, inspection body and certification body in the country and relevant institutions
- **Value Chains Development**, for Cassava, Palm Oil and Cocoa, from farm to fork strategy.
- **Enabling Policies.**



Coordination and collaboration with MDAs

Following the Launch of the project on 19 March 2019, which marked the commencement of the project in its inception stage, significant progress has been made in respect of setting the stage for needed coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders

involved in value chain through its initial meetings with key stakeholders of Ministries Department and Agencies. Within the framework of these meetings, the following achievements have been made :

- 1** Rolled out the concept of the project and provided better understanding of the 3 key processes within the framework of the project and the expectations
- 2** Obtaining relevant data on selected value chains
- 3** Understand the operations of these institutions as related to their operations and services to the selected value chain
- 4** Foster the platform for effective collaboration and coordination for successful delivery of the project



UNIDO through the Project Chief Technical Adviser, has successfully had met with listed stakeholder below;

- Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)
- Sierra Chamber of Agriculture and Development (SLeCAD)
- Small and medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA)
- Ministry of Health & Sanitation (MoHS)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Safety (MAFFS)
- Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce Industry & Agriculture (SLLCIA)
- Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB)

Establishment of quality infrastructure services

Endorsement of action plans to set-up globally accredited food testing labs, certification bodies and training centre at slsb.

The ability of developing countries to exploit commercial opportunities, to compete on global markets and to participate in international value chains is often challenged by their difficulties in demonstrating compliance with quality requirements and trade rules. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) helps to tackle these challenges by working

with them to set up an appropriate Quality Infrastructure System (QIS). Such a program is one of the specialized services that UNIDO offers among its overall activities to promote ISID. The approach offers developing countries, and economies in transition, opportunities to eradicate poverty and develop sustainably. ISID helps them to build their industrial base as a platform

for social inclusiveness, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and integration with the global trading system. Developing and a coherent and mutually supportive QIS is one of the most positive and practical steps that a nation can take in creating a vibrant economy as the basis for the prosperity, health and well-being of its citizens.

The increased choice of competing products brought by global markets and the downward pressure on prices resulting from competition mean that customers tend to reject products that they do not perceive as being quality products, even if the price is lower. Global markets and competition increasingly provide them a choice of better quality at the same price. All component parts of the QIS act synergistically with each other and provide a valuable tool for defining, developing and verifying quality requirements for products and services. The system components assist in the verification and demonstration

that products and services actually meet specified requirements.

In line with this UNIDO has deputed experts to work close with SLSB and do the gap analysis of SLSB labs and certification bodies by comparing the existence available level of competency and capability with the international best practices and standards. Consequently, following gap analysis have been conducted and then action plans have been developed to fulfill those gaps so that SLSB labs and certification bodies should get global accreditation and recognition.

- Development & Endorsement of action plan to get global accreditation of SLSB Food chemistry and Food Micro-biological labs
- Development & Endorsement of action plan for setting up globally accredited management system certification body
- Development and Endorsement of Training Centre at SLSB for sustainability of project outputs in the country

Major objective for above global quality infrastructure services is to support selected value chains related to trusted and recognized test result from SLSB labs and certification services to achieve, "TESTED OR CERTIFIED AT SIERRA LEONE, ACCEPTED GLOBALLY".

Value chains development



Cocoa value chains development

UNIDO has made initial visits to districts of Kenema / Kailahun to obtain first hand findings of operational mechanisms and to understand the problems currently faced along the value chain. The mission team met with small holder growers and their cooperatives of Cocoa and made visits to farm sites of varying sizes ranging from 3-50 acres. The current operational mechanism observed showed that most farmers belong to cooperatives which supports the sales of their produce after harvesting. At the moment cocoa is exported with little or no valued addition processing



Palm oil chains development

UNIDO similarly met with smallholder growers and processors of palm oil value chain at kenema, Kailahun and Pujehun. A number of cooperatives were also met and had discussions on their operations and problems been experienced for possible attention. The meeting was backed up by visits to some oil palm farms and processing sites to view processing facilities. Processing of palm oil was mostly done in the farm sites and by ordinary traditional method which is not in line with globally accepted best practices and will require improvement.



UNIDO has also extended its visit to Medium/ large processors of Oil palm such as Gold tree and held meetings with Senior Representatives of SOCFIN, GOLDTREE Companies and SOLIDARIDAD which are also involved in value chain of oil palm in the country.

Cassava chains development

Consequently, along the cassava Value chain UNIDO have visited Bo and Pujehun and met with processors in the processing centres of Pujehun Growth Centre and Muamia Processing Centre amongst others. A cross section of cassava growers were met during this mission to similarly understand their operating mechanism as well as visits to farms to access practices of cassava farm cultivation. The processing facilities visited were found to be in active operations.



Technical Coordination Meeting of SPS & TBT for setting up WTO NNA and NEPs:

The ability of developing countries to exploit commercial opportunities Article 10.10 of the TBT Agreement requires that a single central government authority be designated to be responsible for the function of notification. The designated Sierra Leone National Notification Authority is the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and aided by the National Enquiry Points (NEPs) at Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Forest (MAFFS) and Ministry of Health (MoH) and NEP for TBT at SLSB.

As per WTO, its responsibility of every member country of UN and WTO to develop a system and mechanism for Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) regulations shared by WTO and to WTO from members' countries.

In line with this 1st Meeting about SPS and TBT NEPs and NNA has been held at UNIDO office to streamline

all NEPs related to SPS i.e., SPS for plant protection, SPS for animal health and SPS for food safety and NEP related to TBT along with fully functional NNA at MTI. In first meeting, members from following relevant organizations have participated on request of MTI under UNIDO SLCOM Project technical support :

- Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)
- Ministry of Health (MoH)
- Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB)
- Sierra Leone Investment & Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA)



Members of the meeting have appreciated UNIDO and MTI initiative to move the process of fully functional SPS and TBT mechanism for WTO NNA and NEPs. Next meeting is planned in July, 2019 to finalize road map and action plan regarding capacity building in the area of SPS and TBT.



Shaukat Hussain
Chief Technical Advisor (CTA),
Sierra Leone Competitiveness
Enhancement Project (SLCOMP) - UNIDO

s.hussain@unido.org
+23233789012
+23277267868

