

R7168
Final Technical Report

Executive Summary

Through impartial consultation with primary stakeholders this project will develop guidelines to ensure that standards and methodologies developed are appropriate to the needs of producers and allow resource poor groups to participate in and benefit from ethical trade. Year 1 represents the first phase of a three year project during which the project will identify appropriate criteria and provide an analysis of methodological needs.

Background

The development of ethical trade in fresh produce offers the potential for improved opportunities for income generation by resource poor groups in developing countries. However, there are questions as to whether emerging criteria and tools for ethical trade, driven by Western ideals, represent the perspectives of resource poor groups involved in export horticulture.

Project Purpose

The project supports sustainable income generation of resource poor groups by developing and promoting methodologies for monitoring and verifying the production and supply of horticultural produce for export in accordance with ethical standards.

Research Activities

Fieldwork began in Ghana (July) and Zimbabwe (August). In Ghana, research was carried out on 9 commercial farms and the farms of 4 smallholder associations representative of the different type of production in the Ghana export pineapple industry. Detailed interviews and repeat visits were then carried with 4 commercial farms and 2 smallholder associations. In Zimbabwe, research was carried out on 4 commercial farms and pack-houses and 2 smallholder schemes.

Fieldwork was completed in January, and workshops for country stakeholders were held in Harare and Accra with 42 and 36 participants respectively drawn from growers, exporters, donor agencies, trade unions, NGOs and government. The workshops reviewed the fieldwork findings, assessed the need for a second phase, and then proposed a strategy for that phase.

In March a workshop of the UK consultative group will be held in London with about 40 representatives of European (mostly UK) importers, retailers, alternative trade organisations, selected ethical trade bodies, and African growers/exporters and trade associations. This workshop will review the African fieldwork findings and agree a programme for Phase 2.

The support for African and UK workshops as well as the in-country support for the fieldwork from the Horticulture Promotion Council, Save the Children Fund, TechnoServe and individual growers/exporters has been very high (including much in-kind support in the form of time, vehicles and logistical support). The approach and the findings have been strongly endorsed in both Ghana and Zimbabwe, and although no organisation in those countries will benefit financially from the work (indeed, it will involve some expense) there is full and enthusiastic support for the work, witnessed for instance in that 4 growers from Africa are paying their own way to attend the London workshop.

The detailed project findings have been treated in strict confidence as they could affect the commercial operations of growers/exporters. Nonetheless, generalised findings of the work have been used at two conferences (Farmers World and the Values Network) and one industry media article. As part of the broader Natural Resources and Ethical Trade programme, the project has also produced two working papers which include project findings and disseminated reports on ongoing work through its web-page. NRET has also been invited to join the CEP SA8000 agricultural standards working group, and was commissioned to do work on horticulture standards in Kenya, Uganda and Africa regional for EC DGVIII, DFID and USAID as a result of work done on this project.

Outputs

Identification of poor people's social and environmental criteria through field research in Ghana and Zimbabwe on 9 commercial farms and the farms of 4 smallholder associations representative of the different type of production in the Ghana export pineapple industry.

Workshops to disseminate fieldwork findings and analyse opportunities and challenges for adopting ethical criteria with private companies, NGOs and trade unions in Ghana, Zimbabwe and London.

Preparation of Phase 2 work programme supported by private companies and NGOs in Ghana, Zimbabwe and UK.

Contribution of Outputs

The project conducted a systematic process of assessing current approaches to ethical trade, consulting key stakeholder groups on findings, and putting in place a strategy for addressing identified constraints through further work.

Further work is addressed in Phase 2 of the project and consists of:

- Developing appropriate, affordable and replicable methodologies for implementing ethical standards and their monitoring and verification;
- Developing models of partnership building to optimise the benefits of ethical trade for resource poor groups participating in export horticulture; and
- Developing strategies for raising awareness of ethical issues amongst different stakeholders.

These objectives have been identified by Phase 1 fieldwork and extensive consultation with stakeholders in the South and North enabled by project consultative groups and end of phase workshops in Ghana, Zimbabwe and London. This stakeholder consultation has included workers in commercial horticulture and smallholders.

Achievement of these objectives will help ensure that:

- a) ethical standards in Ghana and Zimbabwe optimise the contribution standards can make to sustainable livelihoods;
- b) other countries engaged in ethical trade in horticulture have models upon which to draw; and
- c) ethical standards do not arbitrarily exclude certain types of producer from the market place, particularly smallholders.