

MARGINALIZED ORGANIC PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION (MOPA)

About Marginalized Organic Producers Association



Marginalised Organic Producers Association (MOPA) was established in 2010 by Bio Foods Pvt Limited, Sri Lanka's largest organic spice and herb exporter. MOPA currently has a member base of 10,000 small and medium producers in the Central, Uva, Sabaragamuwa, Southern, Eastern and Western provinces. Close to 2,000 of these producers are certified organic farmers involved in tea, coconut and spice farming. Headquartered in the Central

Highlands region of Sri Lanka, MOPA is responsible for disseminating knowledge across their network of farmers on extension information, good agricultural practices, financial management and Fairtrade principles. MOPA also manages the farmer network on behalf of parent company Bio Foods. This involves collection of produce, delivery of fertiliser and in some cases, primary processing.



Market Constraints

Organic farming in Sri Lanka is organised in closed networks of farmers. MDF has identified two key constraints in the organic spices and herbs market system: the lack of access to better information and significant post-harvest losses. Information on good growing practices is traditionally disseminated through government channels, as well as some private sector extension services. However, the extent and relevance of these Extension Officers' knowledge is limited. This results in lower-than-optimum yields. In addition to this, post-harvest losses at farmgate level are currently estimated at 15-20%, mostly due to poor harvest handling techniques and minimal use of harvesting tools and storage equipment. This results in a loss in volume and quality.

Intervention



Digital extension services via mobile phone app to increase productivity



Training for extension officers and farmers on app usage



Introducing traceability to better manage the organic produce value chain



Knowledge sharing on best agricultural practices

Working with MOPA, MDF aims to improve information provision to farmers via the introduction of a mobile phone app. Given that mobile applications have the potential to be useful in farming and allied activities, the app will add a digital layer to MOPA's existing information delivery channels and help reach MOPA's farmer networks in a more efficient and timely manner. The app will feature eight modules that address a variety of relevant themes including farmer registration, production details, farming methods, plantation requirements, disease management and pest control recommendations, fertiliser usage details, pure and mixed cropping percentages, pre- and post-harvest estimates, packaging and delivery logistics, weather forecasts, and organic buyer and certification details. This information is expected to improve farmgate productivity of MOPA's farmer clusters.

In addition to developing the app, MDF will support MOPA to train staff on app usage and familiarise farmers with the functions available on the app through training sessions.

