



MDF in Sri Lanka

What is MDF

The Market Development Facility (MDF) is an Australian Government funded multi-country initiative which promotes sustainable economic development, through higher incomes for women and men, in our partner countries. We connect individuals, businesses, governments and NGOs with each other, and with markets at home and abroad. This enhances investment and coordination and allows partnerships to flourish, strengthening inclusive economic growth.

MDF is funded by the Australian Government. It is implemented by Palladium in partnership with Swisscontact.

What we do

MDF began in 2011 in Fiji and expanded to Sri Lanka in 2015. In Sri Lanka, MDF has a portfolio of partnerships that support private sector businesses on different aspects such as access to technical and digital advisory services, introduction to globally competitive business models, marketing and promotion, capacity building, industry stakeholder coordination and regulatory reform.

MDF works in these following sectors and thematic areas:

Tourism

- Coordination
- Data and Promotion

Authentic Sri Lankan Goods

- Blue Swimmer Crabs
- Giant Freshwater Prawns
- Specialty Coffee
- High Value Agriculture



* Cover photo: English Tea Shop (ETS).

MDF is supporting ETS with a Women's Agripreneurs Program where female farmers will become sustainable supply sources of organic herbs, spices, vegetables and fruits for the new ETS wellness tea range.



Case study

Taking Giant Prawns to market

Inland aquaculture is a growing sector in Sri Lanka, accounting for approximately 13 per cent of annual fish production, with close to 49,000 households estimated to depend on inland fishing. Over 2017-2019, MDF supported aquaculture business Divron Bioventures to strengthen its supply chain, provide technical advisory services to fisher communities, and expand supply and export capacity of Giant Fresh Water Prawns (GFWP). GFWP, is in high demand in the export market and select local high-end restaurants.

MDF took on a multi-pronged approach to supporting Divron, working with the business on its internal processes, as well as helping it improve fishers' knowledge and practices.

With MDF support, Divron was able to benefit 3,306 people, generate 68 full-time positions and increase exports by 34 per cent, while generating additional income of LKR 128,768,450 for fisher communities.



Our Impact

Key Results for 2019*



28,963

Number of people benefitted



\$14,924,108

Additional income



392

Jobs (FTE)**



\$1,111,899

Private sector investment leveraged



Blue Swimmer Crabs, a MDF focus area in Sri Lanka

MDF Impact

Despite the steady growth of the Sri Lankan economy in recent years and impressive gains in overcoming socioeconomic challenges, a large proportion of the Sri Lankan population is still vulnerable to poverty. MDF's work in Sri Lanka directly impacts the most vulnerable through private sector-led growth in inclusive, export-oriented sectors.

Since inception, MDF has contributed to transformative impact for the country's poorest. In Mannar alone, MDF's partners have created over 300 jobs for women in seafood processing. Within the organic spices and herbs sector, MDF's work has led to increased income for over 780 farmers, including 380 backyard women farmers in the Southern, Central and Uva provinces, many of whom did not have access to a market earlier.

In 2020, MDF is enabling information provision for farmers via globally competitive initiatives such as digitisation, introducing efficient business models to increase productivity and connecting the private sector directly to smallholder farming communities to increase incomes.

The program is also providing technical support to transform Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority's tourism research framework and strategic support to diversify Sri Lanka Tourism Promotional Bureau's promotional efforts, as well as helping the private sector through the Hotels Association of Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Tourism Alliance with industry coordination.



Over 500 tourist accommodation providers are better informed on COVID-19 risk management following MDF-supported awareness workshops.



12 workshops were carried out over six provinces.

MDF has been actively working with partners to respond dynamically to the COVID-19 pandemic and remains committed to supporting Sri Lanka's economic recovery through building resilience.



We hope that these very useful workshops organised by THASL and MDF will help small and medium properties, in particular, be better prepared.

Mrs. Kimarli Fernando,
Chairperson, Sri Lanka Tourism on THASL-MDF Awareness Workshops for accommodation providers.



*Cumulative results for 2015-2019.

**Full-time employment.