

About ETS



English Tea Shop (ETS) is one of Sri Lanka's largest spice and herb infused tea exporters, supplying to 55 international markets. ETS sources primarily from small farmers in Sri Lanka. The company's buyers in the UK, Germany and France have demonstrated demand for more products, but ETS is unable to meet this requirement due to supply challenges including certification.



Market Constraints

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



Extension services to increase productivity



Knowledge sharing on species and best practices

MDF is working with ETS to improve information provision through better extension services and reduce post-harvest losses through knowledge sharing. Given the high cost of certification, this intervention will seek to improve the productivity of existing certified farmland to thereby increase production, reduce wastage at farmgate level and increase farmer income.

Although ETS sources a variety of spices and herbs, MDF will support a select few crops that have been identified as those with the best business case for the partner to increase local supply - lemongrass, turmeric, cardamom, moringa and vanilla.

MDF will support extension services and information through a 'training of the trainer program' covering good farming practices such as correct input usage, composting methods, harvesting techniques, and post-harvest handling and transport. MDF will also work with a special consultant on developing a manual that can be used to disseminate this information.



Photo credit: English Tea Shop