



World Food Programme

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Sri Lanka at a glance

South – South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Country Project

Supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China

May 2023



SRI LANKA

Strengthening the Resilience and Livelihoods of Vulnerable Smallholder Farmers to Climate-related Risks in Sri Lanka.

OBJECTIVE

To equip smallholder farmers, government officials and local private enterprises with relevant knowledge, skills, and technologies to increase productivity, improve harvest and post-harvest management and enhance access to markets.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

President Secretariat (Office responsible for WFP-Sri Lanka Partnership)

Ministry of Agriculture of Sri Lanka

Department of Agriculture, District Secretariats, Divisional Secretariats

Farmers Organizations of Anuradhapura and Monaragala districts

CBL Plenty Foods Pvt Ltd and Maliban Agribusiness Pvt Ltd

Industrial Services Bureau (ISB) Sri Lanka

PHASE OF THE INITIATIVE

III (January – December 2022)

THEMATIC AREAS



**Value Chain Development
for Smallholder Farmers**



**Post-harvest Loss
Management and
Food Systems**

SSTC MODALITIES



**Policy dialogue
and workshops/
seminars/webinars**



**Online/ offline
training courses**



**Study tours to China
(virtual or in person)**



**Expertise deployment/
exchange visit**

1012 PEOPLE ENGAGED



613 men and 399 women



TECHNICAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE SSTC ACTIVITY

**Ministry of Agriculture and
Rural Affairs of the People's
Republic of China**

**WFP Centre of Excellence
for Rural Transformation
in the People's Republic of
China (China)**

**Department of Agriculture
of the Government
of Sri Lanka**

ISB Sri Lanka



Development challenge and the SSTC solution

Sri Lanka is ranked among the ten most affected countries by extreme weather events. In the dry zones of Sri Lanka, recurrent droughts and sudden rains result in major losses for smallholder farmers that are largely dependent on their rice and maize production. This combined with challenges in post-harvest management puts the vulnerable communities at risk of food insecurity and acute malnutrition.

Currently, the country is experiencing its worst economic crisis since it gained independence in 1948. It comes on the heels of successive waves of COVID-19 threatening to undo years of development progress, severely undermining the country's ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More than 6 million people – nearly 30 percent of the population – are currently food-insecure and require humanitarian assistance. Reduced domestic agricultural production, scarcity of foreign exchange reserves and depreciation of the local currency have caused food shortages and a spike in the cost of living, which is limiting people's access to healthy and affordable meals.

The economic crisis will push families into hunger and poverty – some for the first time – adding to the half a million people who the World Bank estimates have fallen below the poverty line because of the pandemic.

Smallholder farmers form the backbone of the food systems but are among those hardest hits by the economic crisis. Rice and maize production in Sri Lanka dropped by nearly 50% in the year 2022 according to the Crop and Food Security Assessment conducted by FAO in WFP.

Non availability of imported fertilizers, weedicide and pesticides, shortage of fuel were the main reason of this drastic fall. In addition, prices for farming inputs and food commodities were soaring to 2-3 folds. Smallholders' capacity to cope has been stretched to the limit, severely undermining their ability to invest in farming and withstand any future disasters such as floods and drought.

The WFP-MARA SSTC project in Sri Lanka is focusing on strengthening the resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable smallholder farmers to climate-related risks. Capitalizing on the cutting-edge technological solutions from China in rural development, the project identified technology gaps in Sri Lanka and promoted the sharing of need-based solutions with China in the area of climate change adaptation and resilience building.

Through the SSTC mechanism, knowledge from China on agricultural solutions to increase productivity, lessen the risks of climate change and related extreme weather events impact was shared with key stakeholders in Sri Lanka at central and sub-national levels.



SSTC partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China (MARA)



In 2022, the third phase of the WFP's Global Field Pilot Initiative on SSTC in Sri Lanka, supported by WFP's Global SSTC Team in the Programme Humanitarian and Development (PRO-T) Division and WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in China (China CoE), came to completion.

This represents a step forward in the financial SSTC partnership with MARA that started in 2019, aimed at leveraging the SSTC mechanism to create benefits for the most vulnerable rural populations.

The initiative in the past three phases of implementation focused on strengthening country capacity in resilience-building to assist the most vulnerable rural populations in Sri Lanka.

Between 2019 and 2022, the WFP Country Office (CO) in Sri Lanka collaborated with WFP China CoE and the Jiangsu Academy of Agriculture Sciences (JAAS) in China to carry out a study visit to China where local officials and farmers leaders were trained to learn about Chinese's solutions for maize and rice value chain development and support to smallholders' access to market.

Based on the results of the visit, an online training programme on rice and maize post-harvest management practices for local government officials and representatives of smallholder farmers associations was developed. Furthermore, 5 videos were prepared by JAAS on different thematic areas to support a training of trainers (ToT) programme aiming at disseminating China's good practices and technologies on post-harvest management to smallholders in the project target districts.

Key SSTC results achieved in 2022

This document provides a quick overview of the progress of the SSTC pilot project in Sri Lanka in year 2022, building on the achievements of the previous phases. During this timeframe the following activities were carried out:



SSTC trainings

- 369 farmers (227 men and 142 women) were trained on China's successful rice and maize post-harvest management policies and strategies, social protection services targeting smallholders, and post-harvest technologies. Following a ToT approach, the 5 videos prepared on different topics by JAAS and subsequently dubbed into local language were used by the local trainers to train the farmers and provided a space for joint reflection on lessons learned and opportunities to address common challenges. The local trainers were the same government officials and farmers leaders previously trained through the videos produced by Chinese experts.
- 565 farmers (324 men and 241 women) were trained through ToT videos delivered by Chinese experts on improved production techniques including post-harvest management of maize and mung bean. The trainings focused on improved agronomy practices, timely harvesting, reduction in cost of production, quality concerns in maize value chain, and awareness on the market opportunities.
- 50 farmers and government staff (34 man and 16 women) were trained on the use of the grain dryers and harvesters. The training aimed to raise awareness on the importance of the mechanization that leads to efficiency gains such as reduced time for the harvesting and drying operations, improved about efficiency as well as enhanced grains quality. Mechanization also supports climate-resilient measures to protect harvest from the sudden rains and potential damages caused by birds.



SSTC technologies

- Smallholder farmers were willing to adapt the technologies learned through the training videos produced by JAAS in China. They were fully motivated and supported by the farmer leaders who previously joined the study visit to China in 2019 and had the opportunity to witness the results of the adoption of these technologies and their benefits. The smallholder farmers well understood the necessity for the use of machines and equipment in rice and maize farming and proper land development for good crop growth and yield. Upon their request, the SSTC project supported the in-kind provision of the following technologies:
- 3 rice transplanters and 3 power weeders were provided to farmers organisations (FOs) and to the Department of Agriculture of Sri Lanka in the project area to disseminate technologies and improve rice farming; and
- Land development and irrigation systems were supported by the SSTC pilot project and were instrumental for enhanced farming practices with effective water management.



Early recovery

To aid recovery from economic losses and to invest in the major farming season that started in October 2022, WFP supported 525 maize farmers and 40 mung bean farmers to receive seeds and other inputs through the Department of Agriculture. This early recovery support was timely and critical to assist these communities in meeting their immediate food needs while helping to restore food security in the country.



Capacity building of Farmers Organizations

FOs in Sri Lanka traditionally provide voluntary services to their members and implement government subsidy programmes. WFP aimed at developing sustainable business model for the FOs for them to be able to provide better services to their members including on aggregation and marketing by enhancing the skills and capacity of their leaders and key members.

A three-day residential workshop for FOs on business planning to strengthen residents' services was conducted in Kandy. 28 members (13 men and 15 women) participated in the activity. WFP contracted ISB Sri Lanka to train and coach the representatives of the 3 FOs that have been supported by the SSTC pilot project over the past 3 years.



Private sector engagement

- The project facilitated linkages between Sri Lanka's largest maize processing companies, namely CBL Plenty Foods Ltd and Maliban Agribusiness Ltd, and smallholder farmers. These companies are pioneers in nutritious blended ready-made food products in Sri Lanka. They both are engaged as SSTC partners for the project Phase III with a view at enabling smallholders to sell their products to these two companies while allowing them to have access to services provided by these companies (e.g., input supply for credit, technical assistance, and machinery services); and
- WFP leveraged the companies' supply network to facilitate smallholders' access to seeds and other inputs to address market bottlenecks

Next Steps

Building on the results of the past three phases, the following activities will be implemented in 2023 (phase IV) to deliver on the project objectives:

Strengthening local capacity

- Design and deliver tailored trainings for government staff on post-harvest management, products development, and supply chain management, building on China's relevant expertise and technologies.
- Provide smallholder farmers with equipment for the post-harvest management of grains.
- Design and deliver training to FOs and provide equipment for organic fertilizer production and distribution.
- Carry out assessments on harvest and post-harvest losses in rice and maize supply chains with the engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture, Sri Lanka universities/think tanks with knowledge/technology transfer from Chinese universities/institutes.

Showcasing results and lessons learned

- Develop knowledge products (e.g., videos, brochures, training materials, etc.) and disseminate them to local stakeholders.
- Organize the final SSTC event with partners and key stakeholders of the pilot project at the completion of Phase IV to present achievements, lessons learned, and recommendations.

Engaging with local private sector

- Explore options for knowledge/technology transfer from China to Sri Lanka's private sector actors on product improvement and diversification and market development in close collaboration with CBL Plenty Foods Ltd and Maliban Agribusiness Ltd.

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