

COOL CHAIN FOR VEGETABLES

NEW COOL CHAIN TO INCREASE SUPPLY OF

QUALITY VEGETABLES FROM SON LA TO URBAN MARKETS

Funding granted: AUD 298,985

CONTEXT

The vegetable sector is an important source of employment and income for the local people, especially women, in Son La province, Vietnam.

With the development of supermarkets in Hanoi and other big cities, customers are now demanding high-quality agricultural products – especially ones from mountainous areas like Son La province – because customers believe they taste better and are more nutritious.

However, the lack of a functional cool chain from Moc Chau to Hanoi means that the farmers are losing up to 30% of the produce they send to markets as it arrives in poor condition, especially highly perishable crops such as lettuce, beans and tomatoes. Cooling this produce as soon as possible after harvest and keeping it cool, is the major factor in maintaining quality.

SOLUTION

This project will fill in the current gap in the value chain by working with local farmers, the private sector and government to build and support 10 packhouses with cool rooms, five refrigerated trucks and tracking and technical support. This will ensure retailers and consumers in Hanoi get the quality vegetables they demand, and the vegetable industry in Son La can reach its full potential.

The cool rooms and trucks will use the innovative low-cost CoolBot controllers that allows low-cost conventional air-conditioning units to be used to run cool rooms and allow temperatures of 5 oC to be achieved. This is necessary to ensure fruit and vegetables arrive in Hanoi in peak condition for retailers and customers.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. The Son La vegetable area will become better functioned, hence more sustained with the introduction of the first ever cooling system.
2. Farmers who participate will be better off financially as they receive higher prices for their produce. As most of the farmers are women, this will increase the income and job opportunities for women in the district.
3. The success of this project will filter through to other farmers in Son La and other regions who want to improve the quality of their produce.
4. Job opportunities for people with disabilities or compromised mobility (especially veteran soldiers) in the packing and handling operations for fruit and vegetables as these are normally carried out in packhouses which are located near roads with good vehicular access and near towns.

This initiative is funded under the competitive grant work stream of Aus4Innovation, a flagship four year, AUD 11 million partnership program designed to help strengthen the Vietnamese innovation system and prepare for Vietnam's economic and digital future. The program provides funds to scale already tested ideas to address emerging challenges or opportunities in any sector of Vietnam's innovation system.

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