




TRADE FORWARD
SOUTHERN AFRICA



TFSA Sector Work in Eswatini

The Trade Forward Southern Africa (TFSA) programme set out to enhance the participation of SMEs in regional and global value chains in high potential sectors. Working through implementing partners and business support organisations (BSOs) in Eswatini, TFSA has delivered sector specific interventions designed to address Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and facilitate compliance with regulatory and standards requirements, as well as the less tangible barriers related to distance to market.




Eswatini Snapshot: November 2021-November 2022


<h1 style="color: red;">45/203</h1> <p>SMEs FARMERS</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="color: #0070c0; font-size: small;">255 individuals (252 women) trained in international standards and regulations (ISO, HS, GGAP, FSC2000)</p>	<h1 style="color: red;">26</h1> <p>SMEs</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="color: #0070c0; font-size: small;">26 individuals (25 women) Supported with web-based database and networking sessions to increase visibility</p>	<h1 style="color: red;">14</h1> <p>FARMS</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="color: #0070c0; font-size: small;">Started preparing for audits and certification, as well as putting in place systems for implementation of GAPs requirements (record keeping system, production procedures)</p>
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Through this sector specific training, and business and product development support, TFSA has helped empower BSOs and SMEs throughout Eswatini to improve business operations, and product output and quality to meet international standards and regulations. For many, this means having the increased ability to demand higher prices, and a business and products ready for international markets.

TFSA Priority Sectors in Eswatini



Condiments & High Value Specialty Foods



Fruits, nuts and vegetables

Dominated by a few large exporters, with a growing number of SMEs becoming export ready. The sectors are interconnected: The government's fruit tree planting campaign and donor support improve SME capacity and the availability of fruits for processing and preservation.

TFSA Support to the Condiments and High Value Specialty Foods Sector

The increase in global demand for sauces and condiments presents great opportunities for SMEs in Eswatini to tap into this growing market, whether through supplying to larger established exporters or exporting their products directly. In both scenarios, compliance with international standards such as Global Good Agricultural Practices (GGAP) is a key barrier for most SMEs.

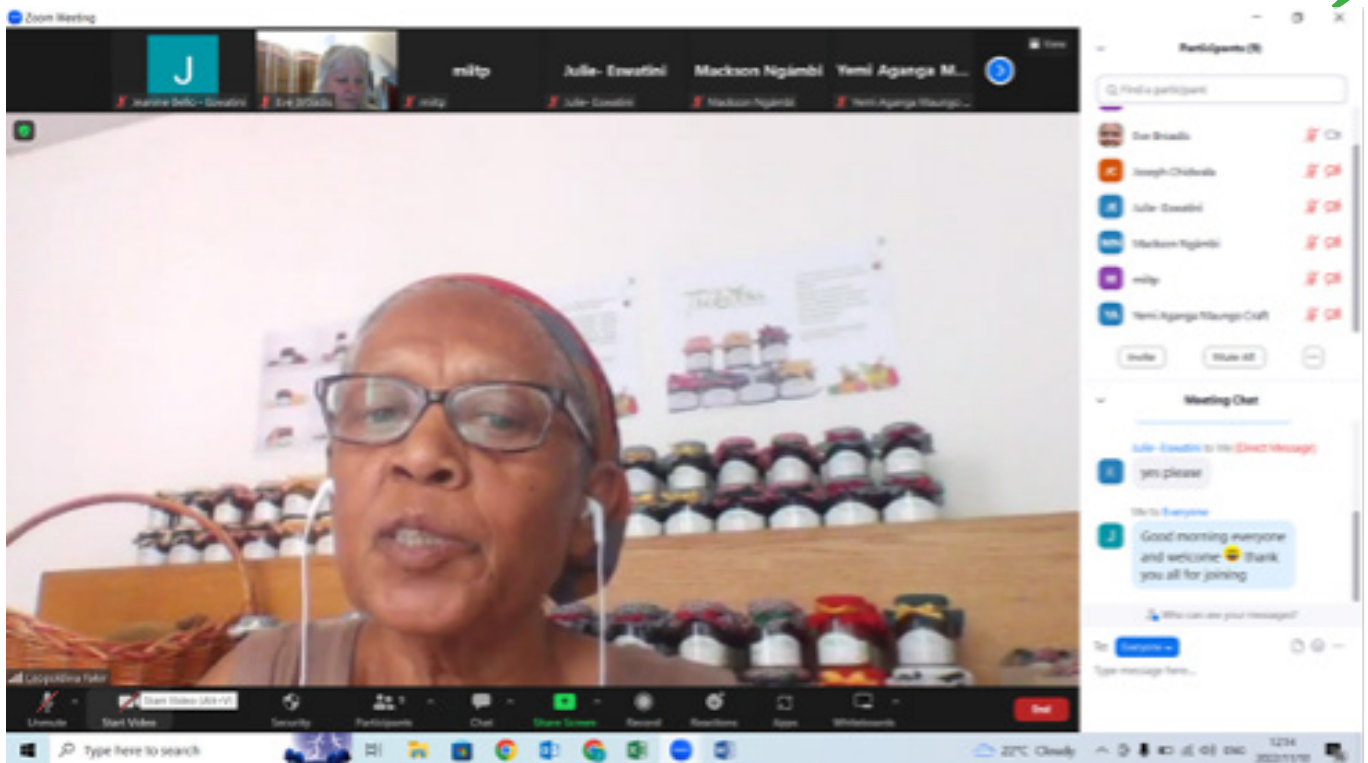
Working through business support partners, Fair & Square and Women in Trade and Development (WITAD), TFSA designed a range of activities to equip SMEs in the sector, most of them women-owned, to help growers and manufacturers of processed goods put in place systems and protocols to meet international requirements.

- **Training on food safety** related regulations and standards requirements, namely GGAP, Global Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles, ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems and Food Safety Systems Certification (FSSC) 22000 to equip SMEs with the knowledge to comply with the necessary international food safety standards, including product labelling, packaging and nutritional content requirements.
- **Building operational readiness** through post-training production site visits to support implementation of training topics, including gaps assessment and action plan to complete preparation for audits and certification.
- **Strengthen technical support by government agencies** through delivery of refresher training, including updates of recent changes, to the Ministry of Health staff responsible for conducting hygiene and safety inspections and check for HACCP compliance. Subsequently, health inspectors – at their own request – briefed the SMEs in preparation of inspection visits.
- **Building exporter and marketing readiness** through development of a [customs and legislation handbook](#) for export ready firms, and a [marketing brochure](#) featuring individual company profiles to promote their products to Fair & Square's network of regional and US retailers, and beyond.
- **Marketing and linkage to international buyers** through development of an [online portfolio directory](#), networking event for the SMEs to meet and learn from successful entrepreneurs, and facilitation of virtual buyer engagements for selected export ready SMEs.



Being part of this training was such an eye opener. We were equipped to ready our products for export from baby steps to giant leaps. Lots to learn. Lots to do. Thank you to Trade Forward Southern Africa and WITAD for being our enablers.

- Bhekiwe Zwane, CEO, Kokonono



Fair and Square buyer engagement meeting in November 2022. A total of 10 food and cosmetics product manufacturers had the opportunity to present their businesses and products to Fair Trade Scotland.



We couldn't do any of this without TFSA. Even us, as a business support organisation, we're building our own capacity, we're learning and that is so important. Personally, I've been learning about the processes, understanding more about food hygiene and safety and regulations, and that is helping me to have a better understanding of how to help someone else to get their export somewhere, which is fantastic. For our entrepreneurs, if you look at the pre and post training surveys we did, the ratings are fabulous, they're really, really good! People are learning and comprehending, and it's making a difference.

- Julie Nixon, Eswatini Country Director, Fair & Square

Ongoing support and initiatives will help further the inclusion of SMEs in global value chains. Under the scope of work delivered by TFSA and partners, a number of recommendations were identified.

Key Recommendations for Future Actions

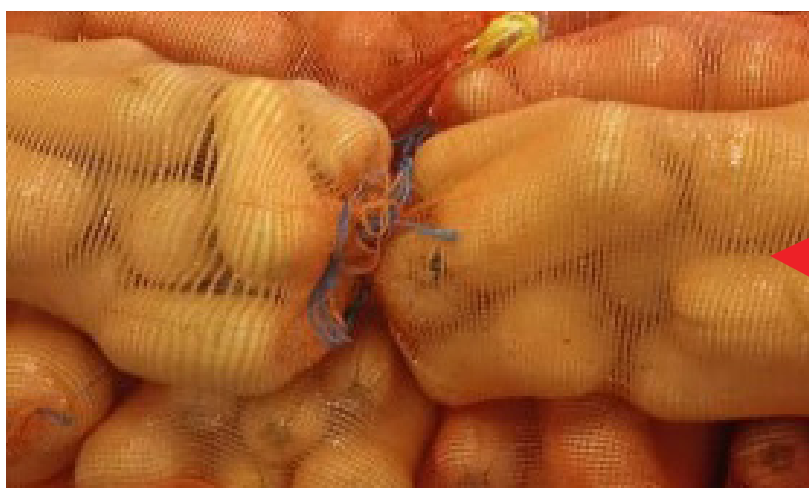
1. Follow-up support and continued firm-level tracking of progress should be included in the design of training activities to assist participants in the implementation of concepts and practices covered in training and pursuance of required certifications.
2. Support that culminates in linkage to markets has proved to be highly motivating and can incentivise the complete implementation of practices and strategies required to successfully pass audits and achieve certification.
3. BSOs can effectively build standard training and support programmes that follow the setup of TFSA interventions to ensure a scaling-up plan to support more businesses.
4. Further training on budgeting and financial management as it relates to export trade would significantly strengthen SMEs' ability to export and ensure profits, in particular for those firms that have not yet sold products internationally.

TFSA Support to the Fruits, Nuts and Vegetables Sector

Eswatini has a relatively high number of big scale farms, mostly operating in the citrus sub-sector which is enjoying significant institutional investment. Following the 2020 launch of the government's tree planting campaign that seeks to plant 10 million trees by 2025, new growers, mostly smallholder farmers, are emerging. The sector is also seeing growing diversification, with an increased focus on migrating to high value crops such as macadamia and blueberries, and it is benefitting from donor investments into nationwide cold storage infrastructure. To ensure these farmers – and SMEs selling processed and packaged goods – can participate in global trade, it is vital that requirements such as traceability is ensured for the entire supply chain, and that produce is of an acceptable standard for value added products to be exported.

In this context, TFSA and business support partners, the National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) and WITAD, have delivered activities to improve the export readiness of individual small-scale farmers, farmers' groups, commercial farmers and SMEs operating in the sector.

- **Training on Local and Global (GAP)** was based on farm assessments on exposure to GGAP and designed according to the different farmer categories and technical levels. Training delivered increased the knowledge of Local and Global GAP and the understanding of the associated market compliance requirements. To further support GGAP implementation, NAMBoard has engaged with a certification body to design a certification model to support compliance through its recently initiated outgrower programme.
- **Building support capacities** of NAMBoard extension officers to effectively conduct assessments of farm-level compliance with GGAP requirements, and to provide ongoing mentorship and technical assistance to farmers in their implementation of Local and Global GAP. Extension officers were equipped with GGAP handbooks and assessment frameworks to use as guides in their ongoing mentoring and during assurance and audit assessments.
- **Training on agribusiness, finance and marketing training** to equip farmers with a complementary skillset to enhance their capacity to comply with GAP requirements and consequently be able to access markets. This particularly responded to the financial cost burden associated with meeting the standard's requirements.
- **Building export readiness** of SMEs producing packaged or processed goods through training on food safety related regulations and standards requirements, including HACCP principles, GGAP, ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems and FSSC 22000. Information on sector-specific labelling and packaging requirements was also provided, and post-training site visits were conducted to ensure correct implementation of training topics.
- **Building marketing readiness** and enhancing SME visibility through development of individual company profiles for inclusion in the [online directory](#) hosted on WITAD's website, and participation in networking event for the SMEs to meet and learn from successful entrepreneurs.



GGAP certification facilitating export trade for food security

Project Canaan is a 1000 ha farm that is part of the Heart for Africa (Canada) project. Homes for orphaned children and other programmes are located on the farm. Having achieved GGAP certification following the training will be a huge boost towards making the project self-sustainable, as it would allow for export and sales in high value markets.

Butternut squash packed and ready for buyers.

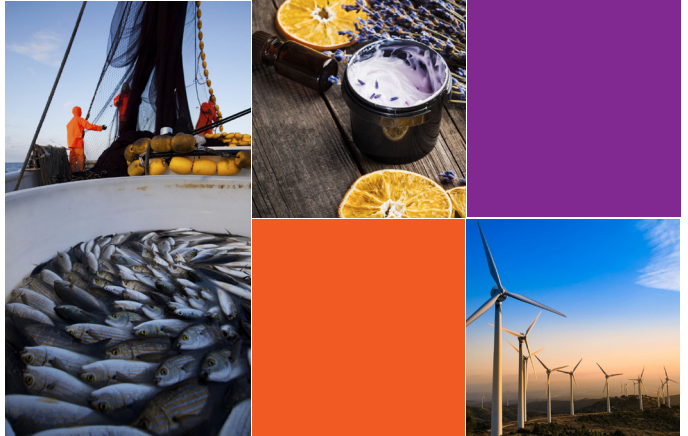
During implementation, TFSA and partners identified a number of recommendations to sustain and scale up interventions.

Key Recommendations for Future Actions

1. Additional support is required for many of the trained farmers to fully implement the GGAP requirements to become compliant and certified. Incorporating support that helps access to finance would increase chances for farmers to fully implement requirements and achieve certification.
2. For small-scale farmers, groups-based models of GGAP certification could be beneficial, especially in cases where an individual farmer cannot fulfil export market obligations.
3. Incorporating continued tracking of progress on implementation of standards and regulations at firm-level, and provision of the necessary support, helps ensure preparedness for audits and certification.
4. Further training on budgeting and financial management as it relates to export trade would significantly strengthen SMEs' ability to export and ensure profits, in particular for those firms that have not yet sold products internationally.

About TFSA

Trade Forward Southern Africa is a UK Government funded initiative that supports the SACU+M business community to grow regional and international export trade through a diverse range of free exporter focused tools, training and resources designed to provide a broad overview of important trade and customs related subjects. Learn more on the [Trade and Information Hub](#), and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for ongoing updates.



TFSA Business Support Partners in Eswatini



[Fair & Square](#), established as SWIFT in 2007, works toward an overall objective of overcoming poverty, supporting 89 SMEs in Eswatini and a further 82 SMEs in Southern Africa, representing a total of 7,000 people (97% women) employed through these SMEs (87% women-owned).



[NAMBoard](#) is a public service organisation mandated to facilitate marketing of agricultural products for Eswatini farmers. The organisation works with over 1500 small-scale farmers, farmers' groups and commercial farmers, providing support to meet regulations and standards requirement at all stages of the value chain for successful marketing both locally and internationally.



[WITAD](#) is a non-profit organisation established in 2014 that provides a suite of support services for girls and women, which includes trade facilitation for businesses. WITAD's mission is to contribute to the reduction of poverty, gender and income inequality, and vulnerability of children, women, youth and refugees in Eswatini.



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