



Regional Biotrade Project in Southeast Asia (phase II)

Improving and conserving biodiversity through promoting the sustainable development of export-oriented natural ingredients value chains.

The Regional Biotrade project is financed by the Swiss Government and implemented by HELVETAS, a Swiss-based international Non-Government Organization. The project works towards achieving BioTrade, defined by UNCTAD as the collection, production, transformation, and commercialization of biodiversity-based goods and services that meet specific BioTrade Principles and Criteria¹.

Rationale

Southeast Asia is a known hotspot of biodiversity. However, with the rapid economic growth and urbanization in recent decades, the countries in the Mekong region are facing increasing socio-economic inequality, coupled with strong negative impacts on the environment and the accelerated loss of biodiversity.

There is a rising international demand for natural products sourced in an ethically and environmentally responsible manner. Biotrade offers an opportunity for the Mekong countries to tap such high-end markets while conserving biodiversity and ensuring equitable benefit sharing among stakeholders. By committing to sustainable practices, substantial numbers of people who gain their livelihood from naturally derived products can improve their income significantly.

The project objectives

The project aims to conserve biodiversity in the Mekong region through the sustainable trade of biodiversity products in a manner that integrates local exporters/producers into global value chains and increases income for rural women and men who depend on biodiversity resources for their livelihoods. The focus is on indigenous plant species that can be processed locally to obtain natural ingredients with high value and export potential. This increases value addition within Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, generating local jobs and income.

The project approach

The second phase of the project builds on the achievements of the previous phase, which successfully introduced the concept of Biotrade into regional supply chains

Country/region

Vietnam, Laos,
Myanmar

Executing agency

Helvetas Swiss
Intercooperation

Executing period

2020 – 2024

Total budget

CHF 4,520,502

SECO contribution

CHF 4,460,000



HELVETAS | VIETNAM
LAOS
MYANMAR

¹ <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/biotrade/principles-and-criteria>.

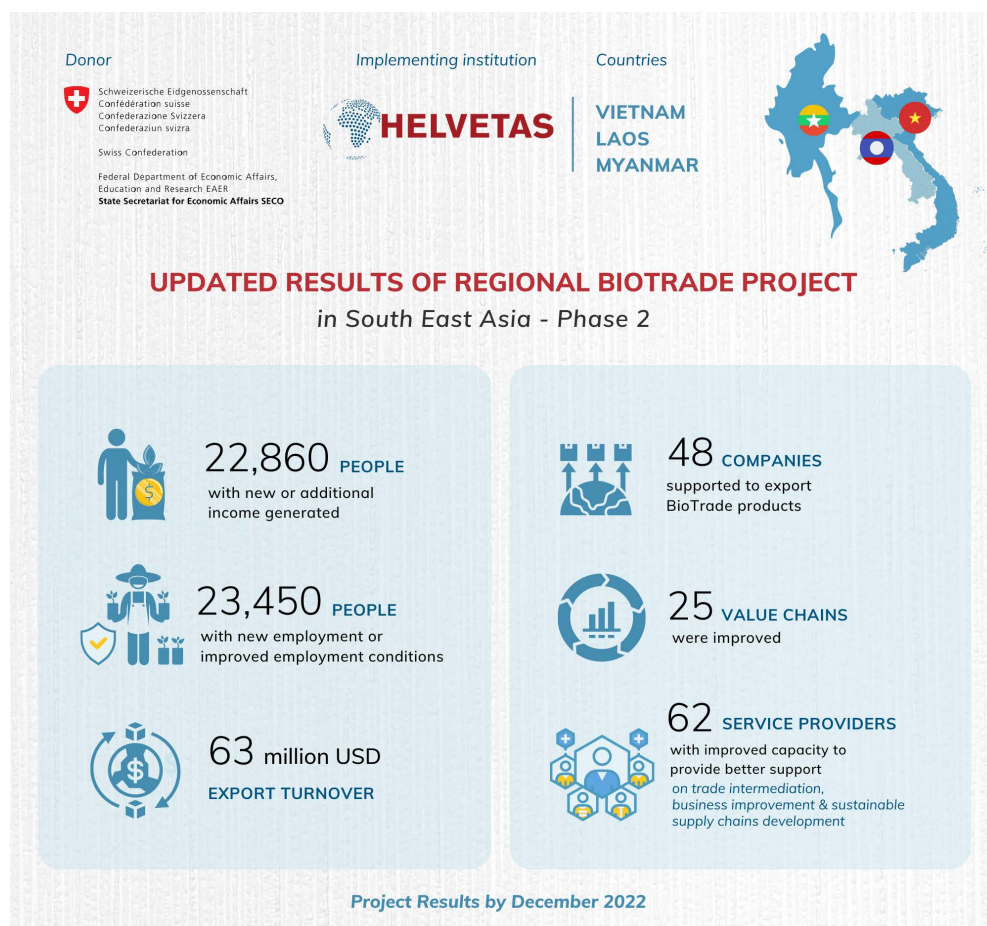
and supported Biotrade exporting companies to gain significant access to new markets.

With the Biotrade business now established, the second phase is continuing to support the Biotrade exporting companies by facilitating the necessary services and other support needed for self-sustaining sector growth. The project is placing greater focus on working with business support organizations, helping them to become permanent actors that promote sustainable business models by providing services to exporting companies in the region.

The interventions through partner and actors in trade promotion, business management, supply chains and media aim to:

- Efficiently link local export companies to buyers of Biotrade products
- Improve management capacities and supply chains of exporting companies complying with the Biotrade principles and criteria.
- Increase awareness of Biotrade to encourage an enabling environment for Biotrade production and consumption.

Results to date of Phase II of the Regional Biotrade Project



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