



Information. Advice. Contact.

ANNUAL

IMPACT

REPORT
2023-2024



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Steve Tipman
Executive Director

As TFO Canada presents the FY2023-24 Impact Report, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable progress we have achieved this year. This report highlights our collective efforts, resilience, and dedication to fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth in developing countries.

Over the past year, TFO Canada has continued to empower small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by enhancing their capacity to access global markets. Through our targeted training programs, market linkages, and strategic partnerships, we have supported numerous entrepreneurs, especially women and youth, to thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Our initiatives have not only facilitated trade opportunities but have also contributed to the broader goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development. By promoting fair trade practices and environmental sustainability, we are ensuring that the benefits of trade are shared equitably and responsibly.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, funders, associates, and dedicated staff, whose unwavering support and commitment have been instrumental in our successes. Together, we have made significant strides toward our mission of catalyzing economic growth through sustainable and inclusive trade for SMEs in developing countries.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our resolve to innovate and adapt to the evolving challenges and opportunities in international trade. With your continued support, TFO Canada will persist in creating meaningful and lasting impact for communities around the world.

Thank you for your trust and partnership!

FUNDERS



MISSION

Trade Facilitation Office (TFO) Canada is a non-profit organization whose mission is to catalyze economic growth through sustainable and inclusive trade partnerships for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries. TFO Canada assists SMEs and Trade Support Institutions (TSIs) from developing countries to access international markets through **information, advice and contact services**. Since 1980, TFO Canada's internationally experienced project staff and sectoral experts have been providing trade promotion, trade facilitation and capacity building services to tens of thousands of SMEs and TSIs from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

YEAR IN REVIEW

2023-2024 was a period in which global trade was marked by a “poly-crisis” created by the sum of adverse factors, including geopolitical rivalries and instability, supply chain disruptions, and loss of productivity due to changing weather patterns. Despite these challenges, global trade showed incredible resilience over the past year. TFO Canada implemented several projects and a variety of initiatives aimed to empower and strengthen SMEs to deal with these challenges and enhance their competitiveness in international markets in four thematic areas.

1. MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE PROMOTION

TFO Canada facilitates access to international markets for SMEs by helping with sector/industry research and providing entry strategies, trade promotion events, and networking opportunities.

15 TRADE MISSIONS

In 3 sectors: Agrifood, Cosmetics, Spa and Beauty, and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Services.

In 10 countries: Canada, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Morocco, USA, South Africa, and Vietnam.

“...As a small family business, Colfrutta was not particularly attracted to using social media or participating in sales trips or trade shows...then I attended the Global Produce & Floral Show in Anaheim, California... This event marked Colfrutta’s debut on the international scene, and the experience was both overwhelming and profoundly impactful for our company. The training we received from TFO Canada in marketing, environmental responsibility, and social media exposure, combined with our strong commitment to social responsibility, significantly advanced Colfrutta’s reputation...”

Antonio Acosta,
Chief Operating Officer, Colfrutta

263 SMEs

151 WOMEN LED COMPANIES

3,928 BUSINESS CONTACTS

resulting in an estimated **\$CAD 3.8 MILLION** in export sales.

In addition **1 MARKET FAMILIARIZATION TOUR** was dedicated to SMEs from Haiti.



Colombian SME at the GPFS 2023 trade show in Anaheim, USA.

2. RESEARCH AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE

TFO Canada offers insights into market trends, consumer preferences, product innovation and emerging opportunities, allowing SMEs to make informed decisions and adapt to changing market dynamics.

In total:



12,605 EXPORTERS,



2,080 IMPORTERS

and

1,992 TRADE SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS
accessing TFO Canada's Online Services.

In 2023-2024: **779** new SMEs registered
on TFO Canada's
online platform

"In an innovative collaboration between the Trade Facilitation Office (TFO) Canada and the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University ... a comprehensive market study ... gave me an overview of the Canadian market, and opened up new perspectives for us.... It helped us to identify areas where we need to improve our processes to meet the high expectations of Canadian consumers...learned effective techniques for penetrating the domestic market... retaining customers...The collaboration has enabled us to make valuable contacts with potential distributors and potential partners in Canada...to position Choko Lakay as a premium brand in the international market"

Jheline Avrilien,
General Manager, Choko Lakay



311 WOMEN
Led



174 MEN
Led

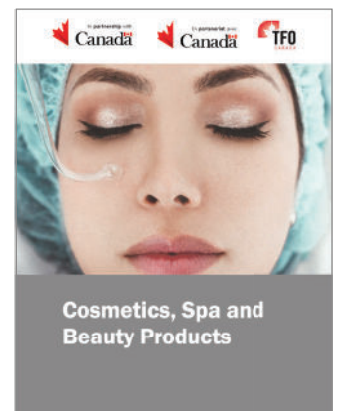
and



294 MIXED
OWNERSHIPS

2 MARKET INFORMATION PAPERS:

a Guide for Women Exporters to Access the Canadian and International Markets, and a Market Information Paper on Cosmetic, Spa, and Beauty Products.





9 MBA MARKET ENTRY STUDIES

completed for women-led businesses, with the support of Concordia University, HEC Montreal, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

57% of the SMEs found the Market Entry Study effective

29% implemented its recommendations, adapting their products to the Canadian market and complying with labelling requirements.

57% applied the market entry strategies to expand and position their brand in the Canadian and US markets, resulting, in some cases, in an increase in yearly sales.

TFO Canada developed a West Bank and Gaza Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Landscape and Needs Assessment for the Canadian Market.

to identify the constraints and opportunities for West Bank and Gaza ICT companies to enter into the Canadian market. The study covered the following research questions:

- Current status of the Canadian economy
- Current status of the Canadian ICT sector
- Current attitudes towards outsourcing
- Awareness of the West Bank and Gaza ICT sector in Canada
- The opportunity for the West Bank and Gaza ICT sector in Canada

“Working alongside the TFO was one of the highlights of the MBA journey. It proved to be a valuable experiential learning experience that required me to pull in different parts of the MBA into one project. It truly was a rewarding experience, as you get to have a direct impact on someone’s small business and life, and they are genuinely very grateful for all the help we were able to give them. Overall, it’s a 10 out of 10 experience that I recommend to everyone.”

Jeff Alfieri,
MBA Program, Concordia University

Key findings:

Anticipated shortage of up to **250K** tech workers by 2025 in Canada

70% of Canadian firms need to upgrade and evolve tech platforms.

The outsourcing market in Canada is now mature with high awareness; however, Canadian companies are

75% more likely to outsource to other Canadians.

Access Canada: A Guide on Exporting to Canada for Companies from Bosnia and Herzegovina

TFO Canada developed a guide on Exporting to Canada for companies based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, customizing the Canadian Trade System to their context in terms of tariffs, duties, and import documentation and control, as well as specific chapters for women exporters and the Communication and Technology (ICT) sector.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

TFO Canada empowers SMEs and TSIs with knowledge and skills to engage effectively in global trade by providing training that incorporates an understanding of international trade and free trade agreements, business development strategies, gender equality and social inclusion, environment, social and governance standards, and climate change and adaptation, reaching 25 Countries from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Middle East.

Four key projects support capacity building and skills development of SMEs and TSIs:

- I. Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth;
- II. Export Launchpad Jordan;
- III. Making Trade Work for Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lesotho, Uganda, Madagascar, Ethiopia; and
- IV. Training workshops on Access to Markets and Management of Value Chains for the Benefit of Women-Owned Enterprises and Cooperatives in OIC Member Countries.



HAITI



GAMBIA



GUATEMALA



ZAMBIA

In 2023-2024:

SME Export Readiness Training

1,638 SMES were trained in key areas such as export readiness, climate change and corporate social responsibility (CSR), e-commerce and digital marketing of which **1,447** were women led

55% SMEs developed new or improved export plans to include environmental strategies.

45 TSI representatives (**28 Women**) completed the Training of Trainers export training program, **8** women attended Management of Fashion Trade sessions.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT *continued*

“North Flavors would like to ...sincerely thank you for the quality of the support throughout the training until the selection for SIAL 2023 which was organized in Toronto, Canada last year from May 6 until May 8...thanks to this training from TFO Canada and the support of Association of Moroccan Exporters (ASMEX) throughout this journey ... gave us significant credibility via international customers... where quality and customer satisfaction are at the top of the pyramid of targeted objectives ...”

North Flavors Team,
Moroccan SME

HOSTED **4** WEBINARS:

1 ‘Introducing TFO Canada’s and Connect Americas’s online services’, and

3 sessions on Introducing TFO Canada and its Online Information Services in English, French and Spanish.

13 TSI PARTNERS implemented at least one activity from gender action plans.

3 TSIs from Lesotho, Uganda, and Ethiopia developed business plans to ensure financial sustainability for the organization.

“TFO Canada has been a key partner in fostering trade relations between Indonesia and Canada, and the support has been invaluable in promoting Indonesian products and facilitating business opportunities. The synergy created by our collective efforts has not only benefited our respective countries but has also strengthened the ties between our nations. I, as a trade attaché of Indonesia, am honoured to have been a part of this remarkable collaboration and am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such dedicated and passionate individuals. I believe that our partnership with TFO Canada serves as a shining example of what can be achieved through great cooperation and shared goals.”

Mahdewi Silky,
Trade Attaché, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia

4. TRADE FACILITATION

TFO Canada advocates for favourable trade facilitation measures that support SMEs in international trade by engaging with policy makers to reduce trade barriers for SMEs.

In Indonesia, TFO Canada focuses on enhancing the risk management of the import control and inspection system for fish and fishery products by the Marine Fish Quality Assurance Agency-MFQAA of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF). The project includes specific activities to ensure gender equality in the fish and fishery industry, in alignment with the Ministry's efforts to empower women and strengthen their position in the value chain of the industry.

Key deliverables:

1 DECREE

on the assessment of the level of risk of marine products was issued.

55 MARINE AND FISHERIES

Quality Assurance Agency (MFQAA) staff (**58% women**) increased their knowledge, and capacities to apply standards and guidelines to Food Safety & Quality (FSQ), Biosecurity & Fish Disease (BS-FD), and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).



6 MFQAA OFFICERS

(**1 woman and 5 men**) visited their counterparts in Japan to increase their understanding of international best practices related to the import of chilled or frozen fishery products, including the application of BS-FD and FSQ standards, and to compare procedures applied in both countries.

63 REPRESENTATIVES

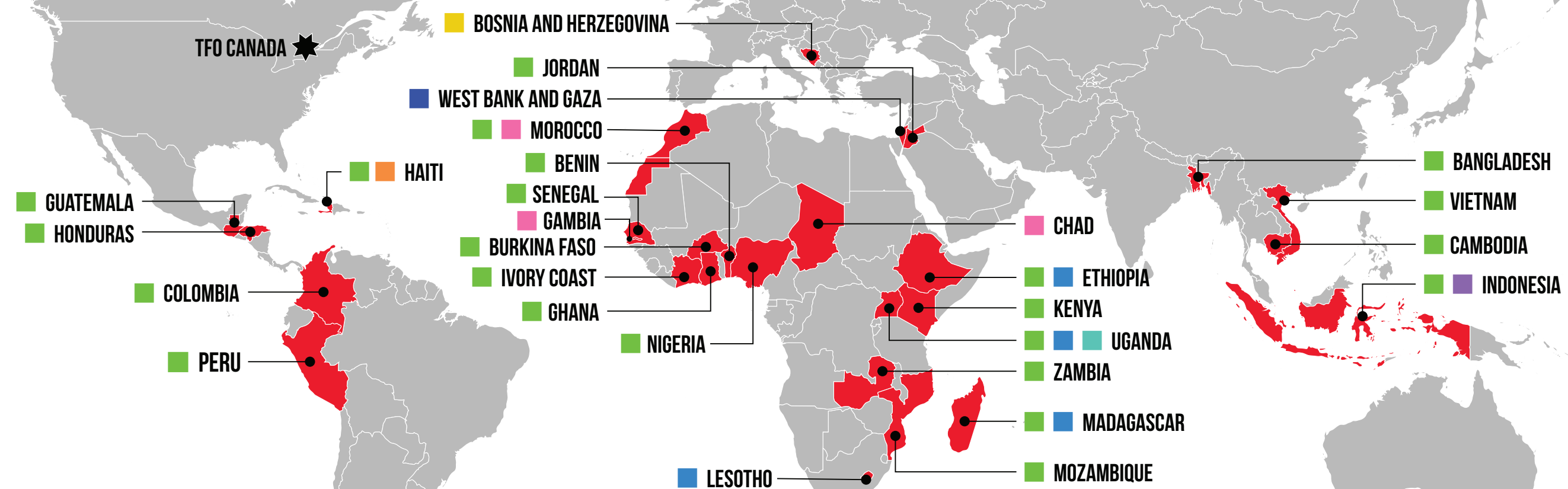
(**28 women, 35 men**)

from

50

Indonesian stakeholders from the private sector increased their awareness of the development of a risk management system for the quality and safety of fishery products, HACCP, and biosecurity standards and guidelines.

WHERE WE WORK



PROJECTS

- Women In Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (2019-2025)
- Making Trade Work for Women in Sub-Saharan Africa (SMO-LUME) (2019-2025)
- Supporting the private sector development through investment promotion to help Haitian small and medium enterprises access the North-American Market" [2021-2024]
- Export Launchpad Uganda (2022-2024)
- Improving risk management of import control and inspection system of Fish Quarantine and Inspection Agency (FQIA) (2022-2023)
- Training workshops on Access to Markets and Management of Value Chains for the Benefit of Women [2023-2024]
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Landscape and Needs Assessment for the Canadian Market [2022-2023]
- Access Canada: A Guide on Exporting to Canada for Companies from Bosnia and Herzegovina (2024)

IMPACT STORIES

COLFRUTTA: ON TRACK TO BECOME ONE OF THE TOP MANGO EXPORTERS TO THE CANADIAN MARKET



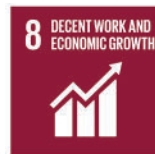
Group of female workers at Colfrutta, selecting high-quality mangoes.

Colfrutta, a Colombian company formally established in 2015, is an example of trust, communication and product quality. The business idea was born in “Mi Cabañita” farm in 1984, when the Acosta family saw tremendous potential in their land, and started to supply the local market. Under mixed leadership, where the management responsibilities are shared between a woman and a man, Colfrutta employs mostly women, and heads of households affected by Colombia’s internal conflicts. Fifteen women are employed at Colfrutta’s packing house on a full-time basis during harvest time.

Based in northern Colombia, in the department of Magdalena, a region marked by armed conflicts, violence, and territorial complexities, Colfrutta has been a pioneer in the development of sugar mango plantations. It has also raised the value of its efforts by venturing into exports and reaching international quality standards.

Colfrutta was one of the first SMEs to be certified as an exporting farm by the ICA Colombian Agricultural Institute. Since 2020, it has also been GlobalGap certified. Today, Colfrutta is recognized as a leading producer and exporter of sugar mangoes in Colombia. Colfruttatakes pride in being a leading fruit exporter, dedicated to providing Colombia’s finest and freshest sugar mangoes to global markets. With years of experience and a commitment to excellence, it has built a solid reputation as a reliable and trusted partner for fruit procurement and exportation. According to Antonio Acosta, Chief Operations Manager at Colfrutta, “quality over any other quality...quality of the product is what has allowed us to generate long-term bonds with customers and trust between the parties.” **Read More**

Our work contributes towards



TFO Canada

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