

MIYONGA FRESH, KENYA

Building resilience to thrive in the changing landscape of global market

About Miyonga Fresh

Miyonga Fresh Greens is an agro-processing business in Nairobi, Kenya. Miyonga sources fresh and dried fruits, herbs and vegetables from smallholder farmers in Embu and Malindi. Each purchase goes to impact the livelihoods of the smallholder farmers, their families and overall community. Yvonne Otieno, Miyonga's Chief Executive Officer, believes that farmers should earn a share of profits for their efforts. It is what drives Yvonne to establish a long-term revenue model that includes profit sharing with the farmers. Through the business, she aspires to empower farmers not only trade in raw materials, but also to process value added products thus increasing their revenues

Currently, Miyonga's business largely constitutes the export of value-added dried and powdered fruit products derived from mango, pineapple, coconut, and banana. Miyonga partners with 2,400 farmers and supports them in growing suitable varieties of crops, setting up and implementing sustainable agricultural practices; helping them to produce fruits that meet international food safety standards, and connecting them to the global market.

Becoming a climate resilient business

Climate change has affected Miyonga's sourcing region in Machakos County which experience heavy and frequent rainfall as well as unreliable, unpredictable, and poor distribution of annual rainfall. The regions also experience an increase in average temperatures. Consequently, this has led to a risk of productivity challenges including production shortages, lower production quality, post-harvest losses, pests and diseases.

As part of the steps taken to increase climate resilience, in 2019 Miyonga joined coaching programmes provided by ITC's GreenToCompete Hub in Kenya. With the goal to better manage climate induced business risks, Miyonga has benefitted from capacity building programmes including "Becoming a Climate Resilient SME" coaching programme. The coaching began with a climate impact assessment with a close look at the localized climate



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data in the production regions, followed by risk and opportunities analysis and development of a climate adaptation strategy.

Based on the exercises, Miyonga developed a set of climate adaptation measures including value addition through processing products that does not meet export quality, establishment of new supplier regions to minimize reliance on one ecological zone and building and operating a temperature controlled multi-purpose processing and packaging facility.

Meeting sustainability standards to remain competitive

Miyonga's products are on high demand for both conventional and organic dried fruits in the European market. However, there has also been an increase of sustainability requirements from the international buyers that the company needs to meet. As a result, they needed to develop a defined business plan to meet this demand, and to strategically position Miyonga to remain competitive in the international market.

Obtaining international certification is one way that Miyonga could ensure that it continues to cater to the European market. As part of the steps taken towards certification, Miyonga participated in Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) coaching programme.

The VSS programme offers an assessment for SMEs to evaluate compliance against any set of standards and their specific requirements and assist them to develop a roadmap to sustainable trade. Through the VSS training Miyonga was able to identify the key challenges to be addressed, such as Fairtrade standards including inputs used, community engagement, human rights, labour practices and advocacy for fairtrade principles in the supply chain.

Representing sustainability values in business

Moving forward, Miyonga focuses on 3 key measures that they have incorporated into their business plan.

- **Phase 1** – Miyonga is increasing the acreage under certification. They currently work with about 2,400 small holder farmers, many of whom are already Global Gap certified. Their target is to upskill 240 framers to be organic certified over the next year.
- **Phase 2** – Miyonga has introduced a bespoke mobile factory that is able to process produce at farm site. The factory is fitted with a solar panel that powers a miller. The mobile factory has several benefits including reducing post-harvest losses, and reducing energy used to transport the supplies to the packaging site.
- **Phase 3** – Miyonga plans to have franchises to the mobile factory to help meet customers' demand. The goal is to have a standard operational procedure and offer farming communities the skills to dry and process export quality product expanding their employment portfolios from raw material producers to processors.

"Without readily available resources, it would have been very costly to just cover the consultancy to conduct the initial assessments. The ITC programme has really helped us develop our sustainability strategy and have a checklist on each of the sustainability standards."

– Yvonne Otieno



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Outlook for Miyonga

Miyonga has successfully embraced green trade practices and is working further to boost innovation and increase their resilience. In their supply chain, they have received technical and financial support from GIZ, Kenya Catalytic Jobs Fund and the Kenya Crops and Dairy Market System (KCDMS) which is part of USAID's Feed the Future Programme. The support is geared towards their mobile processing factory, set up of multiple fruit aggregation centers and to fast-tracking organic certification. Miyonga is also selling its products under their private label in Europe online via Manuyoo, an e-commerce platform that seeks to promote the Best of Made in Africa brands.

For Miyonga, the next goals are focused on growing acreage under organic certification which includes investment in their own farms, and development of an eco-friendly central processing factory.

About GreenToCompete Hubs

The GreenToCompete Hubs develop small businesses' capacity and knowledge to implement green business practices. The Hubs are multipliers of the International Trade Centre (ITC)'s Trade and Environment programme with a focus on national priorities.

With financial support from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), ITC partners with Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC) and Strathmore University in offering small businesses different programmes and tools that help improve Kenyan small businesses' competitiveness in the international markets.

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