

Potential for the ICT-based Traceability Applications in Agriculture & Fisheries Value Chains and the Need of Smallholder Inclusion

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Abstract

It is a widely known fact that the agriculture and the fisheries are highly fragmented sectors having diverse range of actors in the respective Value Chains which rely on numerous sources of inputs. Modern agriculture and fisheries have been highly knowledge-intensive and increasingly been information driven. Most of the present-day knowledge consumers demand for verifiable evidence of food product quality and safety. Traceability has been recognized as an information-based, preventive strategy of ensuring food product quality and safety which ultimately allows actors to trace-back or trace-forward the point in the value chain where their current concern lies. Small holder operators dominate the agriculture and fisheries sectors in Sri Lanka. Without ensuring their effective participation, the expectation of overall performance improvements in the respective value chains would not be realistic. However, the major problem is the lower affordability of the Small Holders to the facility of Traceability as individuals although it potentially brings more benefits. Considering all the potential benefits of Traceability Applications, especially such as the ability of lowering the transactional costs through improved communication, actor integration and accountability, improvements in the resource use as well as operational efficiencies, increase in consumer satisfaction, increase in economic benefits, and many other, the Government of Sri Lanka in collaboration with other stakeholders such as investors, Non-Government Agencies, and Donors can provide support for establishing required Traceability Infrastructures of inter-operable nature giving the special attention to the Small Holder Operators who cannot afford especially the initial fixed costs. In this specific endeavour, networking of Small Holder Operators as registered entities, developing Public-Private-Producer Partnerships would play active roles.

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