

Pakistani Exporters Pre-selected for ECP – Another Landmark Achieved By ASF

Six Pakistani exporters of fresh fruits & vegetables have been pre-selected by the ‘Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries’ (CBI), Netherlands for its ‘Export Coaching Program’ (ECP). The combined efforts by **Agribusiness Support Fund** (ASF) and the Commercial Wing of the **Embassy of Pakistan in Netherlands** have enabled Pakistan to qualify for ECP, for the first time since the program was offered to the developing countries in 2007. Seeing the substantial potential in the program, ASF assumed the responsibility earlier this year since no other agency in Pakistan had been successful in this regard, and the deadline to apply for the program had lapsed. Timely intervention by the Commercial Wing of the Embassy of Pakistan in Netherland allowed the deadline to be extended for Pakistan as a special case, by the CBI. Wide circulation of advertisement in local news papers followed by contacts made through telephone and letters to the selected exporters resulted in the short-listing of 14 applicants by ASF, out of which 6 have been pre-selected by the CBI.

CBI is an Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and part of the development cooperation effort of the Netherlands. CBI contributes to the equitable economic development of selected developing countries by providing export marketing and management support with the purpose of increasing exports to Europe.

ECP is a unique initiative by CBI for extending high level of support to exporters from developing countries, struggling to market their fresh fruit and vegetables in the European Union. The program has been especially designed to help selected companies with export ambition and potential to surmount the many obstacles separating them from sustainable European sales. CBI’s support under this program includes on-site company audits and counseling, an in-depth training at home and in Europe and participation in leading European trade fairs. The single purpose of the ECP is to enable participating export companies to establish a healthy, long-term position on EU market.

The EU’s current 27 member states together consumed some 46 million tonnes of fresh fruit and 59 million tonnes of vegetables in 2007. EU imports of fresh fruit accounted for €21 billion by value, reaching 26 million tones whereas imports of fresh vegetables amounted to 11.8 million tonnes with a value of €12.1 billion.

The European fresh fruit and vegetables market offers good opportunities for exports from developing countries. However, many exporters struggle to gain and hold a position in the European market. Many fail to meet internal organizational conditions with regard to European regulations and quality assurance, while insufficient knowledge of strategic marketing approaches and research methods hinders them from effectively navigating the EU’s complex markets. As a result, they fail to develop a broad enough base for sustainable export business.

ASF has further pledged its financial support for the selected exporters pertaining to the cost of registration and during up-gradation / implementation process.