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Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

GERMANY

Q3: Organization

Public sector

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Q4: Title of case story

Advising Ukraine on Agricultural Trade Issues - within the Framework of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA)

Q5: Case story focus

Trade Facilitation.

Q6: Case story abstract

The bilateral cooperation project "Advising Ukraine on Agricultural Trade Issues - within the Framework of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA)" is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and implemented by a consortium, which is led by AFC Consultants International GmbH. It aims at strengthening Ukrainian agricultural and food companies in their capacities to identify European export markets, enter them and to prepare the opening of their own markets.

Within the framework of the project, one of the trade facilitation measures is the establishment of a help desk in order to improve Ukrainian producers' understanding of agricultural trade issues in view of implementing the DCFTA. The help desk provides small and medium sized Ukrainian companies, which either plan to export or are already exporting, with information about requirements and restrictions to be respected in trading with EU-countries.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Bilateral donor

Q8: Project/Programme type

Single country

Q9: Your text case story

Since the approval of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), the trade processes between EU countries and Ukraine have been officially eased. The bilateral cooperation project, which started in January 2016, aims at supporting the effective implementation of this agreement by several measures, such as political consultation to the Ukrainian Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food, establishment of a help desk as well as conducting trainings and seminars on agricultural trade issues for Ukrainian exporters. Furthermore, information on aspects of agricultural trade within the framework of the DCFTA is being prepared for interested institutions in Germany. The project office, which also includes the help desk, is located in the Ukrainian Ministry for Agrarian Policy and Food. Tasks of the advisory service are currently carried out by a local expert on agricultural trade issues. The target group of the help desk service are Ukrainian small and medium sized enterprises from the agricultural sector with a focus on niche products and organic products, including all major actors along the value chains: producers, processors as well as traders. In the long run, it is foreseen that staff of the Ukrainian Ministry for Agrarian Policy and Food will take over responsibility for the help desk, so that after the end of the project (December 2018), a sustainable continuation of this advisory service is assured.

Within the first months after the establishment of the help desk, most of the queries have been submitted by agricultural producers and processors but also by a few traders and trade companies. Some of the requests have come from specialized non-governmental organizations, analytical agencies and foreign companies, which intend to import Ukrainian products. About 60 % of the questions have been posed by Ukrainian enterprises that do not export their products yet and focus on the domestic market. In most of the cases, the companies are hesitant in providing additional information (address, production capacity etc.) and are careful with answering clarification questions. Most of the queries are received via e-mail or mobile phone, and the related advisory service provided through the help desk is free of charge.

The main concern of Ukrainian producers and processors is how to find potential importers for their agricultural products. The queries can be divided into two groups: (i) general information about access to the EU market; (ii) specific information for a selected product group.

The first group of queries includes questions such as:

- Will the EU review the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)? What field/direction could be reviewed? Is it possible to export products within GSP?
- In which cases is the EUR1 certificate required? Is it possible to complete the invoice declaration? Can the products be exported with the type "A" certificate given by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry? How can one obtain the status of an authorized exporter?
- Is there a quota for the particular product group? How can one import within the quota? Can an exporter get an import license for the export within the quota individually? Where can the information on the used and remaining quotas for a particular product be found? Is it possible to export a product if the respective quota has been used up? Will quotas for a particular product group increase?
- Can Ukrainian enterprises export meat and meat products (pork, beef, mutton) as well as milk, honey, butter, eggs to EU countries? How can the export capacities be registered? What documents are required for this process?
- Have the import conditions of agricultural machinery on lease conditions to Ukraine changed after the Free Trade Agreement was announced?

Regarding specific information, the most frequent questions are related to required information about conditions, certificates, tariff rates, VAT of EU countries. Examples of product groups with specific information requests include:

- labeling and package requirements of flax Chips
- export of maize flour and maize corn to Germany
- export of fish and fish products
- certification for cucumbers with flowers and for Cornichons
- export of flower and vegetable seeds
- labeling of confectionery and chocolates
- export of duck meat

Given the large need of information on agricultural trade issues, the project published a guideline for exporters. This guideline is highly appreciated and used by the target group of the project.

Q10: Lessons learnt

The help desk, which was established in the course of the bilateral cooperation project “Advising Ukraine on Agricultural Trade Issues - within the Framework of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA)” is frequented continuously. This indicates that offering an advisory service on agricultural trade issues meets the needs of the target group. The advice from the local help desk expert has shown to be useful for all interested actors. Enterprises without export experience usually know about EU export procedures and main requirements for selected groups of agricultural products. But they lack information on specific details, for example about food safety. Some inquirers also would like to get in touch with representatives from the Food Safety and Veterinary Service.

The high acceptance and interest in the produced guideline for exporters revealed that the focus on basic information proved to be a helpful way to answer exporters’ uncertainty in the agricultural sector on advantages and requirements of the DCFTA.

One challenge of offering the advisory service was that during the first months of the project, it was difficult to identify staff from the Ukrainian Ministry for Agrarian Policy and Food to be trained in help desk matters. For an efficient and sustainable continuation of running the help desk, a list of representatives from the Ministry who will advise inquirers in the future is required. The next step would then be to conduct trainings for the selected staff. This will include working with common cases and requests, elaborating frequently answered questions and handing over the data base of the help desk, which is required for the future work of representatives from the Ukrainian Ministry for Agrarian Policy and Food.
