



GBRI – making a huge contribution to the horticulture value chain

Founded by Hadija Jabir, a rising star in the Tanzanian horticulture sector, GBRI Solution Co. Ltd rose from humble beginnings as a supplier of fresh produce such as tomatoes, green peppers and green beans to hotels and restaurants in Iringa, Morogoro and Dar es Salaam through its flagship EatFresh brand. Over the past ten years, the company has grown from strength to strength to become a vertically integrated producer and exporter with major agribusiness operations on around 200 acres of farms in Iringa and Njombe regions while supporting about 2,500 smallholder farmers. The company is building sustainable, inclusive, climate resilient horticulture value chains that benefit smallholder farmers while broadening its horticultural economic contribution and inclusion of women and young people in these value chains in the SAGCOT region.

Crucially, the horticulture value chain continue to demonstrate a huge potential in terms of value addition to the agricultural sector and the overall economic growth through exports growth, job creation and raising smallholder farmers' incomes in the SAGCOT region and beyond. Taping this potential, GBRI exports approximately 7 metric tons of horticultural products including fine beans, sugar snaps, snow peas, Hass avocados and Fuerte avocados to the European Union every week.

Having established a foothold in horticulture, the company later diversified its product portfolio and markets and ventured into high value horticultural products for the export markets. At this stage it started working with SAGCOT Centre Ltd (SCL). which took the initiative to promote GBRI's activities and bringing it to the attention of the government from the district, the regional and up to the ministry level. SCL included GBRI farms and pack houses in official itineraries of government officials visiting the SAGCOT region with the first visit involving the Parliamentary Agricultural, Livestock and Water Committee which toured GBRI's snow peas farm in Kiwele. The tour had a visible impact on the committee after seeing the glowing success of a business run by a young Tanzanian woman.

This was followed by visits from other high profile officials including Permanent Secretaries and ministers leading to a SCL-facilitated visit by the Vice President, Hon. Samia Suluhu Hassan who was remarkably impressed by GBRI's work in terms of good agricultural practices, technology and inclusivity. This visit was a major boost to Jabir and her business in terms of exposure.

SCL has been at the forefront in supporting GBRI in scaling up the business by connecting it with other industry stakeholders that provide support to the development of the agricultural sector. Such support is extended to projects funded by international development agencies and through it the company has successfully accelerated its growth and boosted its ability to build capacity of smallholder farmers it works with.

Through this mentorship, Guavay, one of SAGCOT partners worked with GBRI to develop a project concept that successfully attracted an investor who has agreed to invest in building the company's capacity in crop marketing, knowledge and experience in the sector.

SCL has also provided Jabir with a platform to participate in various initiatives that aim to recognize young agro-investors on the African continent. This has enabled her to compete and emerge the winner out of 100 competitors from the African continent. To win such projects one must demonstrate cooperation and the ability to share knowledge with the youth, cooperation with the government and its agencies such as the National Economic Empowerment Council, as well as other businesses supporting the horticulture value chain through input support particularly seeds and fertilizers both industrial and organic.

Fundamentally, SCL also provides GBRI with guidance in business management, policy implementation and also extends access to vital people with skills and experience in the horticulture value chain. For instance, SAGCOT uses its stakeholder network to connect Ms. Jabir with individuals and companies that play a crucial role in the horticulture value chain in other countries. Through these openings, she has participated in a study tour that gave her the opportunity to learn from a company that exports horticultural products in Zimbabwe where she saw how other markets run the business. Work is underway to explore similar opportunities for GBRI in countries that have made significant progress in horticulture particularly Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia.

SCL points to the progress Jabiri has made through high levels of efficiency and knowledge that has equipped her to become a trainer and build the capacity of other youths. She organizes study tours for people keen on horticulture and also works with development organizations such as Vijana Thinktank, WFP and USAID and US Embassy in Tanzania. Her vision, focus and determination have the potential to place her among the first young agro-billionaires in the not-so-distant future.



GBRI workers in the pack house

Progress and Impact

Under the auspices of the partnership it has with SAGCOT, GBRI is promoting smart agriculture and investing in horticulture infrastructure as well as cold chain agri-logistics to increase efficiency and productivity. Determined to consistently improve its cold chain infrastructure, the company has invested over Tsh 80 million in a 60-ton cold storage facility at its Iringa packaging facility elevating its storage capacity to over 80 metric tons.

As a response to new product traceability requirements which are increasingly becoming a standard business practice in the food supply chain across international markets, and increasing global demand for verifiable evidence of traceability as an important criterion of food product quality and safety, GBRI has invested in the Traceability Management System (TMS). This mechanism gives international buyers of GBRI products the ability to trace the company's products through the entire production route - from the farm through to processing, distribution and finally shipping to retail outlets.

Inclusivity and sustainable agriculture

Compliance with Inclusive Green Growth (IGG) principles of inclusivity, environmental management and sustainable business strategies is a key requirement for all commercial investments in the SAGCOT region with the aim to ensure these investments are socially inclusive and environmentally friendly. With women forming the majority of its 350 people workforce, GBRI is one of the SAGCOT partners that have attained high compliance rating to inclusive green growth principles.

Inclusivity of smallholder farmers remains central to GBRI's operating principles and success through provision of extension services, handling equipment and transport services as well as farm input loans for vital necessities such as fertilizers and pesticides to hundreds of farmers. This initiative aims to promote social-economic inclusive growth by empowering smallholder farmers to shift from subsistence farming to formalized agribusiness.

These efforts have continued to improve productivity, volumes and mitigate post-harvest losses hence increase return on investment for both the smallholder farmers and exporters. As a result, GBRI outgrowers are making remarkable progress in technology adoption rates, yields, gradual improvements in crop quality and a reduction in post-harvest losses which is considered one of the most achievable means of improving competitiveness in the horticulture sector.

Additionally, as part of its efforts to help farmers reduce post-harvest losses, GBRI provides them financial credit during the harvest season to facilitate availability of sufficient human resource and ensure produce is harvested on time and maintains its export quality. This program has enhanced productivity per acre and enabled farmers to increase land areas from one acre to an average of 2 to 3 acres leading to exponential growth in incomes and transformation of their living standards.

There are also improvements in farm level competitiveness, high quality produce guarantees and supply consistence for exporters, and compliance with international standards, particularly the Global G.A.P and food safety standards.



SAGCOT's role in promoting horticulture

SAGCOT Centre Ltd. strategically took initial steps in the formation of the horticulture strategic partnership through the first-ever high level horticulture convention that was co-organized and co-hosted with the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) in Mbeya in mid-June 2019 with the main objective of promoting the high potential of horticulture in the Southern Highlands Zone. The convention's focus was on boosting production, investment opportunities in processing and agri-finance, as well as inclusivity of women, youth and SMEs for horticulture development, agro-logistics and access to local and international markets. The convention recommended development of the "Horticulture Blueprint", upgrading of Songwe Airport and the Igawa dry port, introducing cold storage wagons on the TAZARA network and improvements to fresh produce cargo handling at the Dar es Salaam port. These recommendations have since been positively integrated into various government interventions in improving the enabling environment for the horticultural industry in Tanzania.

