

Activity Brief – Iten Irish and Sweet Potatoes Processing Plant

Key Facts:

Location: Iten Municipality, Kenya	Sector: Agro-processing
Investment Size: £15,496m (Ksh2.77b)	Seed Fund Contribution: £735k (Ksh132.2m)
Jobs Created: 10,226	Other Benefits: Climate resilience, reduced waste
Date Deal Signed: March 2023	Date Operational: Mid 2024

Project Synopsis: The 60,000 tonne Irish and sweet potato processing project is a partnership between the UK Government and Select Fresh Produce Kenya and has been supported by the UK’s SUED programme in collaboration with Elgeyo Marakwet County and Iten Municipality.

The project will establish a processing plant for 30,000 tonnes of Irish potatoes and 30,000 tonnes of sweet potatoes into fresh and frozen fries in the first year of operation. Production will gradually grow to a full capacity of 50,000 tonnes per annum for both Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes by the fifth year of operation.



The County government is providing legislative and political support to ensure that Select Fresh have a conducive environment that will help them quickly set up their operations and operate efficiently. Through its leadership, Elgeyo Marakwet will continue to work together with Select Fresh to provide extension services to the farmers and publicise the new facility to farmers across the County to increase its supplier reach and reduce post-harvest losses.

Financials: The UK Government has played a key role in catalysing this investment by providing expert advice and £735k (Ksh132.2 million) in seed fund support. The seed fund is being used to purchase a seed multiplication unit lab and the establishment of a curing room. The lab will help farmers increase their yields from 3-4 tonnes per acre to at least 10 tonnes thereby increasing their income. The curing room will be used to enhance the shelf life of the processed product by one year. Select Fresh together with its partners are investing £14.7m (2.67b) into the processing plant and supporting operations.

Impact: The processing plant will provide a ready market for smallholder farmers in the region at increased prices, and will in its first year support jobs for 5,000 farmers with the projection to increase to 10,000 jobs within five years. The export of potato fries will also lead to significant foreign exchange earnings.



The BHC and the Governor share pleasantries with Select Fresh CEO Eunice Mutua



Select Fresh CEO and the Elgeyo Marakwet Governor signing a Letter of Understanding (LoU)



Select Fresh CEO shares how to increase farm yield for small holder farmers



A smallholder farmer shares the impacts of climate change on potato farming

Quotes

British High Commissioner in Kenya, H.E. Jane Marriott:

“Smallholder farmers are particularly affected by the harsh realities of the changing weather patterns and unstable prices for their produce. That is why today, I am delighted to announce a new KES 2 billion investment by Select Fresh in partnership with the UK Government to finance the first ever potato processing factory in Elgeyo Marakwet.... This investment will transform the lives of thousands of smallholder farmers, building their resilience The UK is proud to be supporting agricultural productivity and delivery of the bottom-up economic model here on the ground in the North Rift.”

Elgeyo Marakwet Governor, H.E. Wisley Cheruiyot:

“I’m happy to co-launch this processing plant project in Iten together with the UK Government. By having in place, a potato processing plant, we will reach all peoples at all levels. Elgeyo Marakwet economy is 95% reliant on agriculture and has never had a value chain project to offtake agricultural produce, by having a value chain project that provides additionality we are helping to make our economy stronger.”

Select Fresh CEO, Ms. Eunice Mutua:

“We are happy to bring to Iten a Potato Processing plant that has been a result of the collaboration between the UK Government and the Elgeyo Marakwet County Government. At Select Fresh our intent is work closely with small holder farmers to ensure that what they produce meets international standards for export. ... We are keen to ensure that the methods that we use are environmentally friendly and promote climate resilience.”