



Linking Products from Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley to the Market



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The market survey report is part of a three-year project “Market-led approach to sustainable management of agrobiodiversity for livelihood outcomes” implemented in the Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley (LCPV) area from June 2019 to May 2022. The financial support to the project has been received from Darwin Initiative (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK).

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1. Background

In the current era, agricultural marketing plays an important role. The farmers need to adapt to changing market conditions when the country becomes more market driven. Generally, agricultural marketing involves a number of process and activities like collection of agricultural products, determination of quality through grading and sorting, and development of organized market. Then, the final product reaches to the customers. However, in case of Nepal, agricultural marketing is still not organized. Along with this, the situation of the market has been changing due to increase in consumer awareness for buying environmentally friendly products.

Kaski district is a mountainous region which offers beautiful picturesque scene of the mountains, terrains, lakes and other natural resources with great tourism values. The growth of internal and external tourism gives opportunities for agricultural producers to market their produce to the local hotel and restaurants and increase their income. Thus, linking local tourism and agricultural food production may contribute to the economic development of the district. In this way, there is an interest of farmers to grow agricultural commodities in large scale to meet the demand of the district. However, it is necessary to understand the market condition, consumer's demands and supply. When it comes to Kaski, the main type of farming practiced is subsistence farming, while few farmers are involved in commercial farming. This makes the district more reliant in farm produce coming from other districts.

Tourism service providers i.e. hotels and restaurants play a very important role here as they can influence the eating habits of both internal and external tourists by promoting local cuisines to create market for local products. For that reason, this study explores to find connection between hotels, restaurants, tourism industry and local producers.

Therefore, through this market study, the project aims at identifying local agri-food products of Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley (LCPV), suitable for being marketed to the hotels and restaurants of Pokhara Metropolitan City. In order to do so, this market study analyzes

the local restaurants and hotels to understand how local agri-food chain concept works in Kaski district. Also, it is essential to understand how welcoming the hotels and restaurants are to promote and adapt local-based brand. This survey will provide a report of market assessment and will ultimately be a basis for sustainable business development to link the products of smallholders to market and increase their income. This would be useful to refine project activities (production and marketing aspects), and plan capacity building interventions to groups and cooperatives.

2. Objective of the Market Study

The market study has three main objectives:

- Look at the potentials and challenges for linking local agri-food growers with hotels and restaurants by analyzing agri-food chains in Kaski district.
- Understand the requirements that hotels and restaurants have in regard to sourcing local agri-food products.
- Understand the perspective of the hotels and restaurants for accepting an intermediary support structure like packaging house and their commitment to work together with such support centre.

3. Methodology

To have an in-depth knowledge on the potential and challenges for linking local agri-food growers via packaging house with hotels and restaurants in Kaski district, a questionnaire survey was done with the support of LI-BIRD, Pokhara. Total of 35 samples were collected from 18 restaurants, 15 hotels and two school in Kaski district. This study was conducted from 10 December to 22 December 2019.

Primary data were collected through individual survey by using semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared and finalized incorporating suggestions after consultation with LI-BIRD. It was then digitized using Kobo form. Kobo tool is used to collect data digitally and the result was processed by pandas library which is written for

Python programming language for data analysis and manipulation. The survey was done with the help of enumerators to different categories viz. hotels, restaurants and schools.

Simple statistical tools were used to analyze different parameters which are described in the following section. Frequency table, diagrams and percentiles are used to describe the result. The descriptive interpretation was done by using pie charts and bar graph. For graph plot, matplotlib was used.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Order Time and Delivery Time

Order time is the time when the institutional customer of the vegetable, fruits and other food items place an order of the required products for the next day. From the survey, it is found that all the respondents' order time is between 7 - 9 PM. It is also observed that the order is placed after closing their last order, which is generally done by the head of the kitchen. The kitchen manager checks their stock and places order accordingly by phone or SMS.

Delivery time is the time when the order placed by the institutional customer is delivered. From the survey, it is found that almost all the customers i.e. 97.1% respondents want their order delivered by 7 - 8 AM. The order time and delivery time have implications on how Packaging House operates to fulfill the obligations.

4.2 Source of Purchase

There are mainly two types of sources which sell the food and vegetables to the institutional buyers: wholesale supplier and retail outlets. Among 35 respondents, 63% of the surveyed institutional customers are getting their vegetable and food from the wholesale supplier while around 26% are getting from retail outlets nearby the institution itself. Likewise, 11.4% of the food and vegetables are purchased from other vendors like farmers selling in doko, vehicle-based sellers, and farm owners who supply to the institutional buyer to some extent.

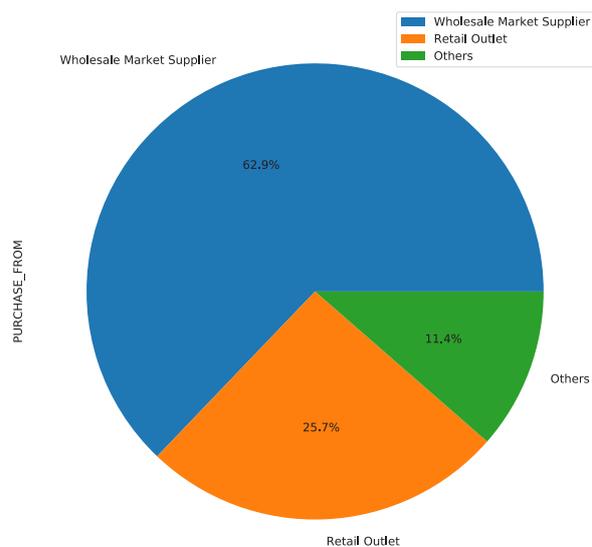


FIGURE 1. PIE CHART SHOWING SOURCES OF PURCHASE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

4.3 Types of Suppliers

In this section, we discuss about whether the buyers are dependent on single or multiple suppliers to get their fresh vegetables and fruits. It was found that 48.6% of respondents get their supplies from both single supplier and multiple suppliers. Remaining respondents didn't disclose any information regarding it.

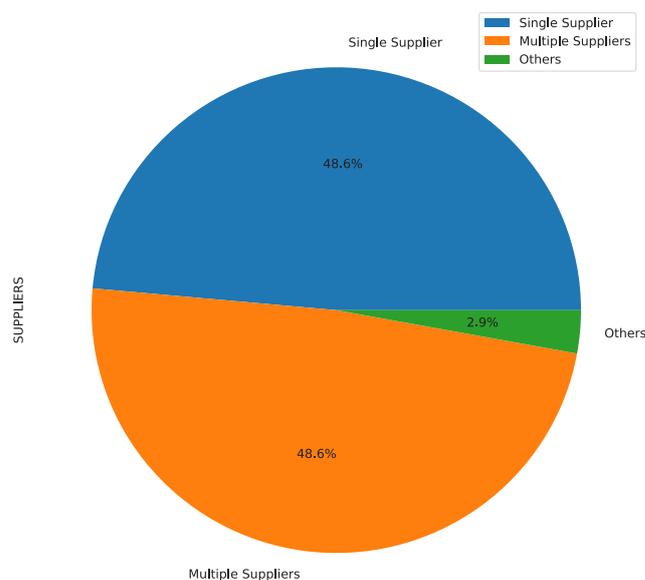


FIGURE 2. PIE CHART SHOWING TYPES OF SUPPLIERS

4.4 Buyers' Opinion Towards Grading and Unified Branding

Currently the vegetables and fruits are being supplied to the institutional buyers through plastic crates and plastic bags. There is no standard grading and branding of such products in Pokhara. The respondents were asked about the perception of grading and branding and were also briefed about the hypothetical scenario of sorting, grading and branding. They were also made aware that some products might not be available with the smallholder farmers all year round. Together with this, they were explained about unified landscape branding proposition. Then, they were asked whether they were open to buy such products. The result shows that they are positive about this proposition: 77% of the respondents are interested to buy such products whereas others showed some interest but are not sure, i.e. 'wait and see' status.

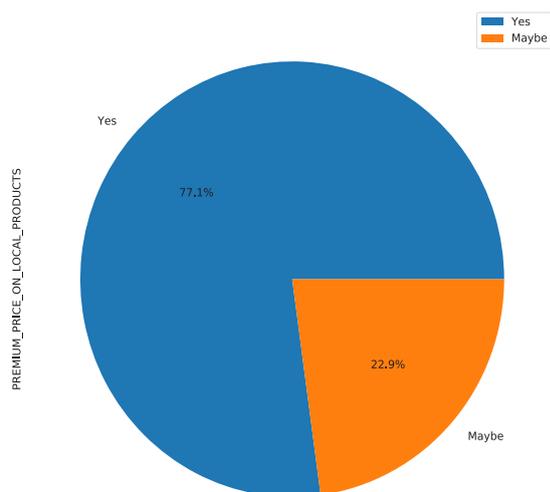


FIGURE 3. BUYERS' OPINION TOWARDS BUYING ULB BASED PRODUCTS

4.5 LCPV Products and Preference of Buyers

After explaining the hypothetical situation with processing, packaging and sales centre, the respondents were also briefed about the concept brought by LCPV-DI project to initiate a packaging house promoting locally branded products. They were asked about their preference in such situation. Almost 9 out of 10 are ready to start business with such centre. The remaining respondents have also somehow

interested. This result indicates that there is good potentiality to operate such processing, packaging and sales centre in Pokhara, though it requires detail studies on other aspects to make it sustainable.

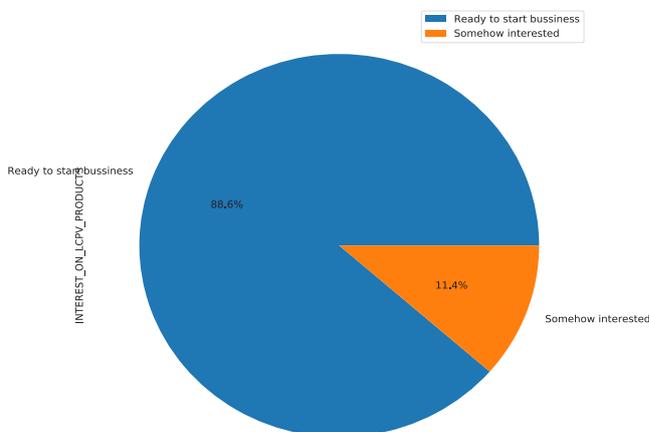


FIGURE 4. INTEREST OF BUYERS TOWARDS LCPV PRODUCT

4.6 Buyers' Willingness to Buy Local Products

During the survey, we prepared the list of products that can be produced in Kaski district. Basically, the products are listed in four major categories i) Cereals, ii) Fresh Vegetables & Fruits, iii) Meat and Fishery and iv) Pickles and herbal products. Similarly, other products are Spices, Jam and Jelly, Honey, and Dried Vegetables. The respondents have chosen multiple products at the same time. Among them, fresh vegetables and fruits are dominant. On the other side, surprisingly, pickles and spices are least demanded by the institutional buyers.

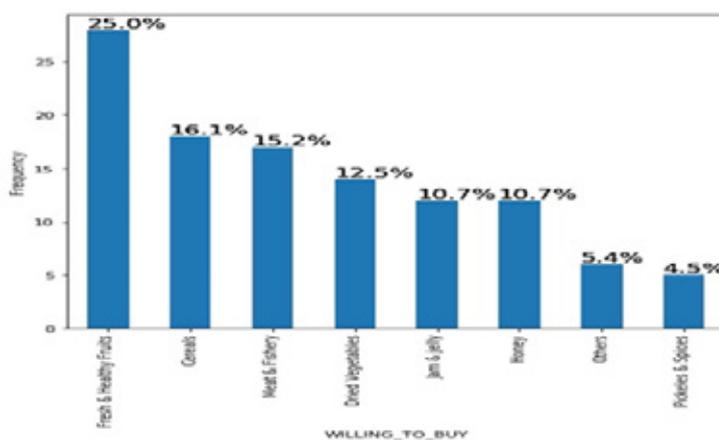


FIGURE 5. WILLINGNESS TO BUY LOCAL PRODUCTS

4.7 Regular Buying of LCPV Products and Key Items

From the preliminary studies, we already knew that the institutional buyers (hotels and restaurants) need the products based on their menus irrespective of the source i.e. whether the LCPV producers or elsewhere. In this context, we ask them about their willingness with alternative of mixing the products from regular supplier and LCPV unified branded products, and operate mixed type supply chain in the future.

It is found that just above 65% of the respondents are willing to buy regularly from such mixed type supply chain of LCPV and Regular Products. And, around 34% of the respondents said that they might start regular business with such supply chain business. And, very few respondents said 'No' to such arrangements. It means they are happy with current arrangements.

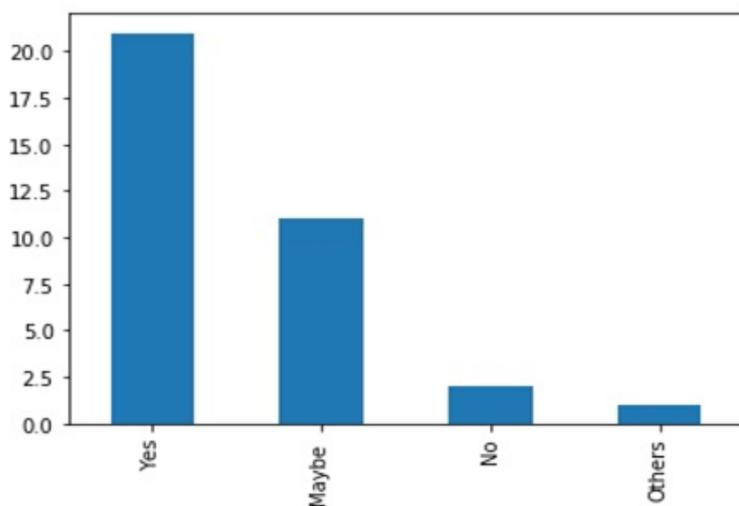


FIGURE 6. BUYERS WILLINGNESS TO BUY REGULAR LCPV PRODUCT

It is also important to know the bottleneck products of the industry to win the business. So, we explored the 'Key Items' of the respondents with the help of this survey as well. The result is described below in the table:

TABLE 1: KEY ITEMS PROCURED BY HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

KEY ITEMS	Number of Buyers
Seasonal vegetables	14
Cauliflower	11
Cabbage	6
Green vegetables	6
Nepali Khana	5
Beans	4
Potato	4
Lettuce	3
Capsicum	2
Carrot	2
Fruits	1
Onion	1
Others	1
Momo	1
Tea	1
Tomato	1
Nepali food	1
Green chilly	1
Paneer	1
Thyme	1
Salad	1
Apple	1
Mint	1
Mushroom	1
Tulasi	1
Oregano	1
Corn flakes	1
Feta cheese	1
Parsley	1
Broccoli	1

4.9 Expectation from LCPV Unified Branded Supplier

As from the preliminary studies, there are key aspects on current supply chain of vegetables and food that makes the relationship strong between the seller and the buyer: timely delivery, quality, price, monthly payment system and off-hour supplies.

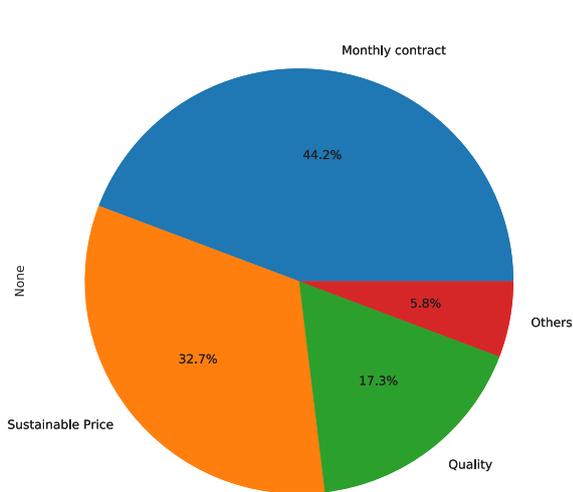


FIGURE 7. BUYERS EXPECTATION FROM LCPV UNIFIED BRANDED SUPPLIER

In this context, it is necessary to find the expectation of buyers who are willing to start business with 'Packaging House' of LCPV products. Monthly supply and payment contract, sustainable price and quality are the major expectations from the buyers with LCPV branded centre. The result shows that 44.2% of the buyers expect that there should be monthly contract and 32.7% expects that there should be fixed price between the seller and the buyer.

4.10 Willingness to Pay Premium Price for LCPV Products

There is general perception that the products sourced locally are fresher than those products sourced from outside Pokhara. The buyers want to know who the producers actually are. If the seller claims that products are locally produced then the buyers should know about it. Now-a-days it is seen that there is an increasing concern of end consumers about the food and vegetables they consume. So, ensuring locally sourced products to the end consumers could be 'value added service' to those food caterers. In this context, we asked them whether there is possibility to offer LCPV Branded products to their consumers with premium price.

The result shows that 77.1% of the respondents believe that they can get premium price from their consumers, which could be partly passed onto the producers, while others are not sure about that.

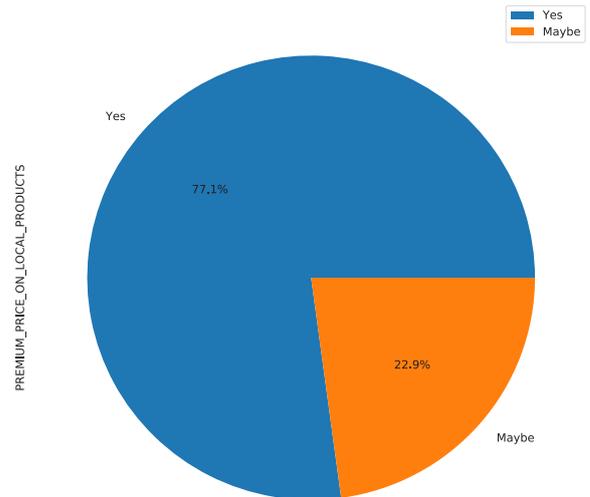


FIGURE 8. CUSTOMERS WILLINGNESS TO PAY PREMIUM PRICE FOR LCPV PRODUCTS

4.11 Use of (ICT) Tools by Buyers

Since the current supply chain lacks demand-supply projection of the products, we wanted to explore the willingness of the buyers to use ICT (Information Communication Technology) Tools to make such supply chain more efficient. We explained the situation where we can analyze their demand projection and provide this data to the sellers through ICT tools. Then, LCPV producers could prepare package of production according to this data. For example there could be demand of 100 kg cauliflower in January as 100 kg per day in 2021. Then, we asked them whether they can put their demand by using ICT tools to the 'Packaging House', before 100 days of harvesting, keeping in mind the price and quality.

The result show that they are ready to communicate with these ICT tools so as to make supply chain more efficient. 82.9% of the buyers are positive about using ICT tools for efficient supply chain management.

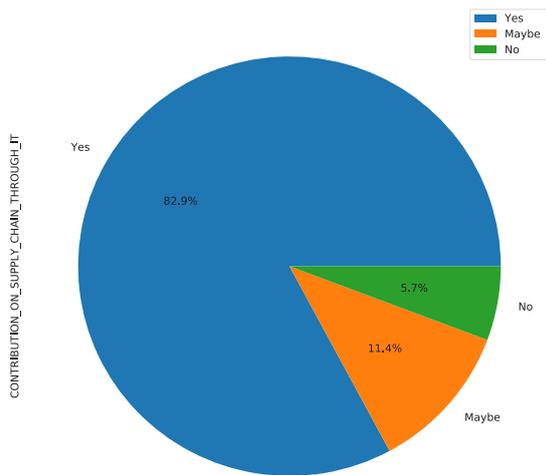


FIGURE 9. CUSTOMER PREFERENCE ON USING INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TOOLS LIKE MOBILE, INTERNET AND WEBSITES

4.12 Menu Development Based on Local Products

Hotels and restaurants already have some local food items like 'Nepali Khana Set' and 'Dhindo Set' in their menu. During the survey we found that almost half of the respondents said that the menus are developed or modified according to locally available food and vegetables while the remaining have not practiced it yet. But we couldn't find any specially developed menu which was prepared by using local products.

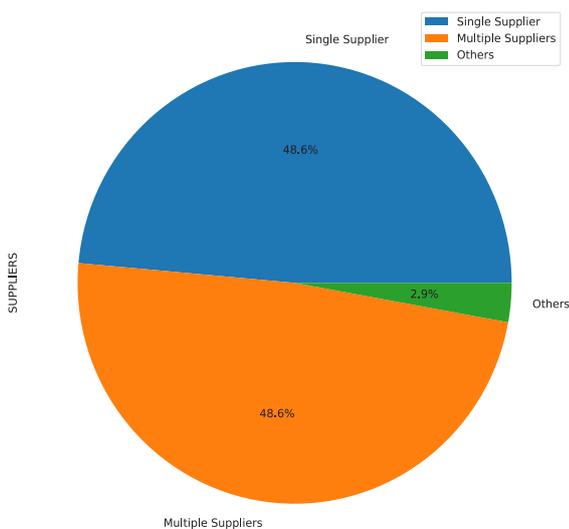


FIGURE 10. MENU DEVELOPMENT BASED ON LOCAL PRODUCTS

4.13 Logistic Arrangement and Payment

Logistic arrangement seems key to the respondents as it is crucial for quality and timely delivery. It is also important that most of the respondents require the products within the same range of time for now. In this context, we explored the current trend of logistic arrangement of food and vegetables to bring to their doorstep. The result shows that 85.7% respondents' logistic arrangement is handled by the supplier and 8.6% respondent arranged logistics by themselves. In 'others' section, we put those responses from the respondents who said both or did not want to disclose. 5.7% respondents said that they used other means of logistic arrangement.

In most of the cases, it is observed that payment of logistic service is done by the supplier themselves. There are no separate bills which means the supplier is paying the logistic cost by themselves.

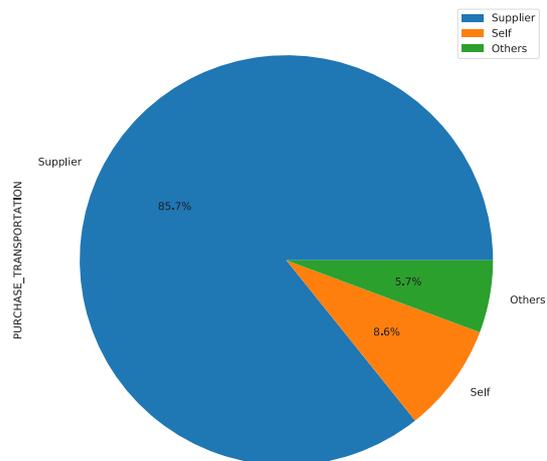


FIGURE 11. LOGISTIC ARRANGEMENT AND PAYMENT FOR FOOD AND VEGETABLES

4.14 Supplier Preference to LCPV Products

At the end of the survey, we requested them to provide their views /suggestions that could be helpful to the LCPV producers. It seems like awareness towards local food consumption and support for local producers; especially the smallholders are in rising trend. We found that almost all the respondents are excited about the prospect of LCPV based quality food

and vegetable. They provided suggestions which are compiled in the following chart. There are multiple suggestions from the respondents to the LCPV producers and its business model.

Here the single supplier is to be understood as a single source from which the institutional buyers want to buy.

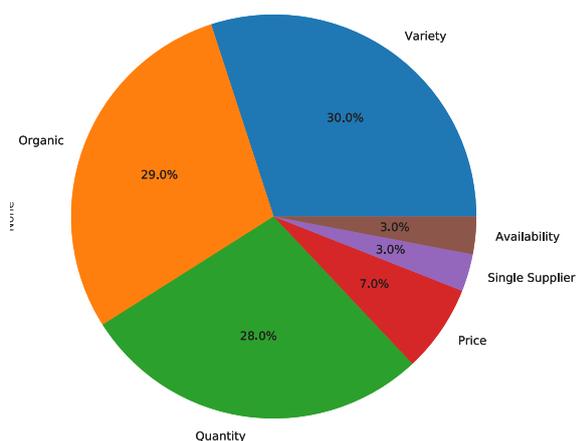


FIGURE 12. SUGGESTION TO LCPV PRODUCERS REGARDING SUPPLIER PREFERENCE

5. Conclusion

Based on our market study, there is ample opportunity to link local agri-food producers and tourism service providers i.e. hotels and restaurants. For successful and sustainable linkages between local agri-food producers and tourism, an intermediary support structure which brings producers and buyers together, should be established. The concept of pack house is preferred by the hotels and restaurants, which are willing to work together. The fact that a professional pack house is being established makes it easier for local small-scale farmers to produce safe food and link it to the pack house. The packaging house with local branding initiated by LI-BIRD is a good initiative where a private sector focuses in i) channeling local products from producers to buyers ii) creating awareness and demand for local products and iii) supporting the growers to deliver quality and quantity product.

6. Recommendations and Actions

Based on the survey results and subsequent analyses, following are the recommendations.

6.1 Establishment of Sustainable Business Unit

It is found that 88.4% respondents are ready to conduct business with a business unit which can supply the LCPV products with unified landscape branding (ULB) model. The growing concern of seasonal and healthy foods, especially the green vegetables, is also supportive to start a business unit. While doing such business, first of all supply mapping of the products at LCPV farmers' level is necessary. The supply map makes it easier to formulate the plan for sourcing of LCPV products and adding other products to fulfill the demand of institutional buyers.

Logistic arrangement for both inward and outward flow of vegetables, fruits and other food items is key for the success as most of the current suppliers are offering such service to the institutional buyers. Layout and design of the Packaging House need to be designed for both vegetables and dry food separately as they are different in nature, and one is perishable and other is storable for certain time. It is recommended that the first level of grading and sorting at cluster level would be beneficial in terms of quality and waste management. It also creates job opportunity at cluster level and helps to transfer skill from the expert to the locals.

The wholesale market supplier is the major player in the current supply chain of vegetables and fruits, which are the key products for LCPV farmers as well to earn cash in regular basis. In this regard, a detailed and separate study of wholesale market is essential. Credit issues at both the supply and demand side are burning challenge for LCPV processing, packaging and sales centre.

Since Development Voyage Pvt. Ltd. is working in the similar sector for more than a decade in Pokhara, it could be a good idea to collaborate with them to establish and run such centre.

6.2 Brand Build up and Awareness

From the survey, it is clear that there is a growing concern over the locally grown agricultural products. While working with smallholder in a cluster-based model, it is important to follow a standard quality procedure among all the clusters who will be supplying their products to the 'Processing, Packaging and Sales Centre'. In this regard, a common standard operation plan needs to be followed by all clusters. And then to create an enabling environment for sustainability of such business, landscape based unified brand could be created. For this, standard operating procedure, preparation and its awareness among the different clusters and then execution is necessary.

There is an increasing concern among consumers over organic food. Fresh vegetables, as an everyday diet are now realized as important for good health. So, immediate promotion of organic farms from LCPV is necessary, which can uplift the LCPV unified branding in a short period of time. This is backed by the survey where majority of respondent are expecting to receive organic products from this centre. Later on, this brand could be used to promote the value-added products like 'Tomato Puree' which could be produced in the same centre.

6.3 Consumer Awareness and Menu Development

There is some room for offering healthy and fresh food with unified branding to end consumers and apply some premium by the hotels and restaurants. It is also clear that locally grown vegetables and food from smallholders are seasonal in nature and healthy to consume. Currently there is a practice of offering food as per menu by the hotels and restaurants and they source the raw material accordingly. In the other side, consumers are becoming more and more conscious about the end to end production of food they consume. Hence there is opportunity to develop some dynamic menus that are mostly based on seasonal vegetable and food that are grown locally and could be promoted accordingly.

Preparing menus completely based on locally and seasonally available vegetables, fruits and food is necessary to enhance the unified landscape branding of LCPV products. This practice will enhance the opportunity to extend the business wings of 'Processing, Packaging and Sales Centre' as well as increase consumption at institutional and individual level. The awareness programme could be integrated with this activity so that end consumers get informed about menu as well as seasonal and healthy food.

'Sarvaguna Kitchen' has been developing such menu to cater healthy food in Pokhara and Kathmandu. Thus, LI-BIRD can collaborate with them for that purpose.

6.4 Data Analytics and use of ICT Tools

Data analysis of market price trend, cost of production and awareness about seasonal and healthy food is yet another step to be followed to get well prepared for sustainable business model of sales centre. Similarly, different databases can be created regarding smallholder farmers, their farm practices, logistic and other product/service providers, weather status, buyers of vegetable and food, end consumers, nutritional facts etc. Since there is an interest of consumers to use ICT tools (Phone, SMS, Internet) for efficient supply chain of vegetable and food, a pilot project to understand the pros and cons of contract farming based on digital farmers diary/platform could be designed and implemented. For this, end to end level work is necessary i.e. from farm practices to consumption by buyers.

DV Excellus could be a potential strategic partner as they are operating KHETI.FARM and KHETI.FOOD android apps as well as web app www.kheti.farm to cater end to end service provision to players of agri-ecosystem.

Annex 1: List of hotels and restaurants

S.N.	NAME	ADDRESS
1	HOTEL MADANI	BAIDAM ROAD,POKHARA
2	ATITHI RESORT AND SPA	SHANTI PATAN, LAKESIDE, POKHARA
3	MY HOTEL PVT LTD	LAKESIDE STREET, POKHARA
4	BYANJAN	LAKESIDE ROAD, POKHARA
5	MED5 RESTURANT	LAKESIDE, POKHARA
6	FRESH ELEMENTS	MIDDLE PATH STREET, LAKESIDE , POKHARA
7	ROSEMARRY KITCHEN	BAIDAM ROAD,POKHARA
8	ROYAL PALM	CHAAUTHE, POKHARA
9	UTOPIA GARDEN	LAKESIDE, POKHARA
10	HOTEL TARA	LAKESIDE, POKHARA
11	HIMANCHAL SCHOOL	JANAPRIYA MARGA LANE 2, POKHARA
12	STEP BY STEP SCHOOL	MASBAR, POKHARA
13	KUTI RESORT	LAKESIDE
14	HOTEL QUEENS PARK	LAKESIDE
15	HOTEL JAL MAHAL	GHARIPATAN
16	JETHO BUDHO BHANSA GHAR	BAIDAM ROAD,POKHARA
17	BIYA RESTAURANT	NEW ROAD
18	ALMOND CAFÉ	NEW ROAD
19	HOTEL BASANTA INN	LAKESIDE
20	AANKHI JHYAAL	LAKESIDE
21	HOT and SPICY KITCHEN	BIRAUTA
22	HOTEL GLACIER and SPA	LAKESIDE
23	TUNGANA RESTAURANT & LOUNGE BAR	
24	STEP UP RESTRO and BAR	
25	UMBRELLA CAFÉ and HEALING CENTRE	LAKESIDE, KHAHARE
26	GOLDEN GATE HOTEL	LAKESIDE
27	LANDMARK HOTEL	LAKESIDE
28	MOUNT KAILASH RESORT	BARAHI GHAT
29	HOTEL PENINSULA	LAKESIDE
30	TEMPLE TREE RESORT	LAKESIDE
31	MONALISA HOTEL	DAM SIDE
32	FRENCH CREPERIE	TAAL BARAHI MARGA
33	SARANG KOREAN RESTAURANT	BAIDAM ROAD,POKHARA
34	NORRITER KOREAN RESTAURANT	DAM SIDE
35	NATTSUL KOREAN RESTAURANT	BARAHI GHAT
36	POKHARA PARTY PALACE	BANSTOLA THAR

5. Partnership & Development

5.1	How long is relationship with current partners whom you buy your vegetables and food? How is the relationship with them?
5.2	Do you have any formal / informal group from the industry who are willing to purchase vegetables and food from local producers? If yes, please take the key notes like person, place, contact address
5.3	Are you willing to contribute for efficient supply chain where producers/producers group can be reached and dealt for business from your end using IT tools?
	a) Yes, because: b) No, because: c) Maybe, depends on:
	Have you ever tried to develop menus based on local food and vegetable? If yes, is it from your end or with collaboration? Please mention the name of collaborative partner.
	a) Yes b) No

6. Financial

6.1	What are the major financial issues in current business practice?
6.2	If working together with LPCV Unified Brand Supplier, what financial improvements would you expect or demand from them? (highlight current + expectations)
	a) Price Fluctuations (Fluctuating price or Fixed Price)
	b) Margins
	c) Payment terms (1 months, 2 months or more)

7. Logistics

7.1	How is your current purchase transported to you? Who is paying for this?
7.2	What would you expect from the unified LPCV brand supplier in terms of logistics?

8. Story

8.1	Would you be able to get premium price for the locally grown vegetables (Unified LPCV Brand) from your customers?
	a) Yes, because:
	b) No, because:
	c) Maybe, Depends on:

Annex 3: Pictures of market study



For more information

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