

SUCCESS STORY

Chancho Flowers builds thriving business from scratch

Chancho Flowers started as dream for Thomas Mattanovich after he attended a horticulture fair in Kenya. He applied to lease 30 hectares of land in Sululta, Ethiopia, even though many told him the land was unsuitable for production because it flooded during the rainy season.

“There are always opportunities,” Mattanovich said. “If you push hard enough, things are possible.”

Mattanovich began discussions with USAID’s Agriculture and Trade Expansion Program (ATEP) in July 2006 to develop a new vegetable export program. By August, the farm’s first trials of snow peas were underway. Program assistance included weekly visits by field agronomists as well as a cost-shared investment in a drip irrigation system and hybrid seeds. USAID-ATEP also helped design his farm to mitigate flooding.

The collaboration paid off by early 2007. Chancho Flowers shipped more than 2 MTs of high quality snow peas to buyers in the UK. The buyers were impressed with the quality and asked for more products. Since then, Mattanovich has invested in 10 additional product trials, including snap peas, hot peppers, squash, and strawberries.

Because of its initial success, Chancho Flowers secured a joint-venture agreement with Dutch Freesia, a breeding and trading company, and established Giant Freesia Ethiopia. The new venture is focusing on the UK market. Projected investment during a two-year period includes \$1.2 million for 3 hectares of greenhouses, irrigation, a packhouse, and staff training.

Mattanovich expressed his appreciation to USAID-ATEP for the expertise, guidance and contributions for his enterprise, noting in particular that

“The involvement of USAID has drawn attention with the Dutch flower growers, contributing to the present Freesia agreement negotiations.”

The company plans to increase the farm’s total greenhouse floral area to 15 hectares, dedicating the remaining 15 hectares to fruit and vegetable production.

USAID-ATEP is an aggressive, market-led effort that is energizing four industry sectors — coffee; hides, skins and leather; oilseeds; and horticulture. The program is improving competitiveness and productivity for thousands of Ethiopian farmers, processors and traders resulting in increased exports, investment, employment, and incomes.



Workers harvest peas at Chancho Flowers, a USAID-ATEP lead client in Sululta, Ethiopia.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.
A greenhouse during construction at Chancho Flowers.

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— Thomas Mattanovich, Owner, Chancho Flowers