

BUSINESS PLAN

Name of Project

FRUITS AND FRUIT JUICE MARKETING FROM KONO DISTRICT

Name of Business

FRUITY-JUICY-YUMMY

Business Products

FRESH FRUITS, FRUIT MEALS AND FRUIT JUICE

Location of Business

GBENSE AND TANKORO CHIEFDOMS, KONO DISTRICT

Contact

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**BUSINESS CONCEPT SUBMITTED AS PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF APPLICATION REQUIREMENT
FOR
MASTERS IN GLOBAL BUSINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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1. The Business concept

As in many areas in Sierra Leone, fruit collection for local consumption and petty trading is an important part of livelihoods in Gbense and Tankoro Chiefdoms in the Kono district. Many households in both localities supplement their food intake with a variety of fruits collected from home-gardens, on farms and nearby bushes. Many others will simply harvest and sell their fruits. The most common fruits in these communes include bananas, coconuts, cucumbers, grapefruits, guavas, lemons, lime, mangos, oranges, pawpaw, pears and pineapples.

This project will be registered to run as a family business and will seek to establish one commercial fruit home in Koidu City which will be used as depot and processing centre for fruits collected. The business will start with collection, processing and marketing of bananas, coconuts, lemons, mangoes, oranges, pawpaw, pears and pineapples. The business will thrive on harvesting and collection of these fruits fresh from individual growers and households and processed in the fruit home set up to prepare fruits, fruit cakes and fruit juice for the market. The fruit home will agree a price with fruit home agents who will be hired and trained to harvest and collect fruits for the fruit home. Some agents will be hired on part-time and others on full-time basis depending on seasonality and need. Agents will receive a bonus for the quantity and quality of fruits turned in to the fruit home. Fruits purchased by agents will be transported to the fruit home using transport systems provided by the business. The fruit home will also buy fruits from other vendors and individuals.

Marketing of collected and semi-processed fruits will be organised from the fruit homes and sold to the public, caterers, local restaurants and hotels in Kono and Makeni. The fruit home products will also sell at weekly and daily market fairs. Business cards and road show sales will be used to raise awareness on the value in fruits. Adverts will be placed in newspapers and radio on how to best enjoy your fresh fruits and why you shouldn't miss a glass of fresh juice first thing in the morning. The family will be highly visible merchants participating in community events, conducting short workshops on nutrition and fruit farming, and contributing to fundraising and local causes such as orphanages and schools for the physically or mentally challenged. The mobile juice and fruit vehicle will carry ice cold juice in customer friendly take-away containers that will encourage the eating of yummy fruit salads, fruit cakes and repeat sales.

2. Social Mission

The project will collect and sell different fruits to the public as a vital part of their food intake. The business will be planned and implemented as a socio-economic enterprise which provides employment, training and life-style opportunity for women and young people in the two chiefdoms. The project will allow them to work and earn income on a part-time basis while engaged in other livelihood activities.

3. Target Customers

The main customers will be schools (primary and tertiary), daily and weekly markets, restaurants and hotels in Kono, Magburaka and Makeni axis where fresh citrus fruits and fruit juice will be available at affordable prices. The business will look to expand and target customers in other parts of the country in succeeding years.

4. Target Market and Size

The business is expected to have a wide customer base covering the entire Koidu New Sembehun City and environs, and towns along the road to Makeni, including Magburaka and Makeni city itself. The target customer base will be a conservative minimum of 200,000 – 250,000 people. The income potential from such an organized and well-focused business is expected to be high and rising over the years. The business will seriously consider the costs of selling its products to potential customers in other parts of the country in the medium term.

5. Competitors and barriers to overcome

The main competitors in the fruit trade are individual market women travelling long distances to buy, bag and transport the fruit purchases to various destinations. Their business tact is prone to considerable losses arising from poor transportation systems causing their fruits to perish. Their handling of the fruits is also devoid of any technical skills hence the quality of fruits transported drops on reaching the consumer. The family fruit business will provide more careful and continual care needed during harvesting, transporting and marketing of the fruit home products. There will be reliable and effective transportation to deliver the products to various customers on time and in the right quantities and quality. The family will use its planning and scheduling techniques to run during undesirable weather conditions.

6. Competitive Advantage

Unlike individual competitors in the trade, the fruit homes will provide fresh fruits, fruit meals (cakes and salads) and fruit juice in a clean and customer-friendly environment that will encourage repeat sales and customer confidence. The family will use its business know-how in customer relations and goodwill in business networking to establish a firm customer base that will guarantee sustained income flows. The family already owns local fruit farms in the two chiefdoms which yield about two tons of assorted fruits each year and have several acquaintances in the business location to support establishment of the business. The family has crop production and marketing skills, petty trading skills, micro-credit skills, social protection skills, financial consultancy skills, juice production expertise, and advertising prowess. The business will seek to coordinate these skills in the right balance to get off to good start and sustain. There will be part-time, full-time and seasonal employees depending on need at any point in time. This will help reduce running cost and boost profitability of the business especially in the early years.

7. Estimated Social/Environmental/Economic Impact

Given that the business is about collection and processing of fruits, the magnitude of environmental and social impacts is more likely to be low. Fruit businesses are generally environmentally sound and socially acceptable, hence contributes to the development and environmental and social functions of the communities. However, should there be rotten fruits for disposal, it will be done in a compost pit and the manure used to grow other crops.

The business will continually look to enhance the environmental and social benefits of the project through identification of sensitive environmental components likely to be affected by proposed fruit collection and processing venture.

WHY MY PERSONAL PROFILE SUITS MY BUSINESS PROJECT

I am a Personal Financial Consultant in the banking industry, and banking is good business in Sierra Leone. I have been trained and routinely nurtured to market the Bank's products to a variety of potential customers, and I consider that the investment is worthy and profitable for the Bank. I believe strongly that customers make any business thrive, and so I have mastered the art of knowing what my customers want, how they prefer it, where they live, who they are and how they intend to deal with the Bank. Of course, I have always been in some form of business trading and selling goods to different people, and so my skills at doing this are now at a higher level. Over the years, I have also become very confident communicator and coordinator of people, able to build rapport as and when needed. I mobilize and persuade potential customers to get involved and to keep their interest alive. These unique sales skills will be harnessed proficiently to start and run my business project.

I have managed small personal and family projects. I realized how important it is to focus on the mission of the project and effectively manage resources. I tried as best I can to make the best use of time, money and people available to help me in the small business I managed. For my proposed fruit business, I will be able to draw on this skill and apply meticulously and successfully.

I consider that my competitive advantage also lay in book-keeping and accountancy prowess. This ability will be key in making accurate calculations of cash flows, cash forecasts, and other financial responsibilities characterized by my business proposal. With these skills, I will be able to lead and coordinate my family members and other hired staff into an effective fruit business unit.