LEVERAGING TRADE DATA FOR EXPORT SUCCESS

Capacity-Building Programme for Women-Led Exporters

Programme Report 2025–2026

72 Women-led exporters & entrepreneurs	**2025–2026** Programme period	**Ongoing** Programme status	**3 locations** Colombo • Kandy • Matara

1. Programme Overview

The Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB), in collaboration with Verité Research, implemented the "Leveraging Trade Data for Export Success" capacity-building programme to strengthen the ability of women-led businesses to use trade information in making informed export decisions.

The programme focused on practical use of trade data, product and market analysis, tariff information, market-access resources and competitor assessment. It aimed to help women-led exporters move beyond general market awareness and apply evidence-based information when identifying export markets, evaluating opportunities and developing export strategies.

The programme was implemented during 2025–2026 and is ongoing. It reached 72 women-led exporters and entrepreneurs through sessions held in Colombo, with programme coverage extended to Kandy and Matara.

2. Programme Objectives

The programme was designed to:

- Enhance participants' understanding of export and import trade data.
- Develop skills to identify growing and emerging international markets.
- Improve the ability to analyse product, market and trade trends.
- Strengthen knowledge of tariffs, preferential arrangements and market-access conditions.
- Enable comparisons of Sri Lanka's competitive position with other supplier countries.
- Introduce participants to international trade analysis platforms and data resources.
- Promote data-driven decision-making for export market diversification.
- Strengthen the export readiness and competitiveness of women-led businesses.

3. Areas of Technical Learning

- **Trade Data and Product Analysis**

Participants were introduced to HS codes and product classification, partner-country trade information, CIF and FOB values, units of measurement and methods for extracting and interpreting trade data. Demonstrations introduced the WITS database and ITC Trade Map as resources for examining product and trade information.

- **Tariffs and Market Access**

The sessions covered MFN tariffs, applied tariffs, preferential tariff rates, Free Trade Agreements and preferential market access. Participants were introduced to resources for exploring tariff structures and market-access conditions, including the TRAINS database, ITC Market Access Map and relevant Department of Commerce resources.

- **Market, Product and Import-Source Analysis**

Participants explored ways to identify growing markets and products, analyse demand and market trends, assess competing supplier countries, compare tariff conditions and identify alternative, potentially cost-effective import sources. These approaches support a more informed assessment of export-market opportunities and competitive positioning.

4. Resource Person and Technical Expertise

Technical sessions were conducted by the International Economics Programme team of Verité Research. Mr. Mathisha Arangala, Lead Economist, facilitated the programme and provided guidance on interpreting international trade statistics and translating trade data into practical export strategies. The technical input supported participants in understanding trade indicators and using analytical information to inform product- and market-level decisions.

5. Contribution to Women Led Export Development

Access to accurate and timely market intelligence is an important foundation for businesses seeking to expand internationally. The programme provided women-led businesses with practical knowledge and tools to explore suitable markets, understand competitive conditions, evaluate market-entry opportunities and make more informed export decisions.

By extending programme coverage to Kandy and Matara in addition to Colombo, the initiative supported EDB's broader effort to decentralise specialised export-development services and improve access to capacity-building opportunities for women-led businesses outside the Western Province. The emphasis on applied trade data and market analysis contributes to strengthening the information base available to women entrepreneurs as they consider export-market development and diversification.





6. Conclusion

The programme has strengthened women-led businesses' understanding of trade data and its practical application in identifying export opportunities. The EDB–Verité Research collaboration represents an important step towards promoting data-driven decision-making, enhancing export competitiveness and supporting the growth of women-led e nterprises in Sri Lanka.



