ASEAN-Germany joint cooperation sets to support food safety and quality assurance in the South East Asia and a pilot project in improving fruit juice safety and quality in Thailand is one among the others.

Thailand is one of the world’s largest exporters of pineapple juice concentrate. It exports 18,000,000 to 20,000,000 tons of pineapple concentrate juice per year, worth USD 360 million in 2015, with the average of growth rate 10 per cent each year. However, fruit concentrate quality and assurance standard is a concern for many Thai food processing manufactures in order to secure international trade with the major exporting countries, namely United States, Europe and Japan.

**Approach and Challenge**

Six pineapple juice manufacturers in Thailand took part in this joint public and private partnership cooperation project for advice on how they could improve their product hygiene, authenticity and safety in complying with SGF standard. The six factories were visited by an SGF auditor and being audited in according to the SGF standard.

“Given the high number of machines in the factory, it is important that hygiene issues are addressed. Machines may not have been cleaned properly and this is inconsistent with the measures set by the factory. Many times such measures only exist on paper, and may not be applied in practice. So, problems resulting from poor quality products are often found,” said Ms. Napaporn Rattanametta, the SGF auditor and also the project manager on food safety of ASEAN Sustainable Agrifood Systems.

**Contact**

**Dr. Matthias Bickel**  
Project Director, ASEAN Sustainable Agrifood Systems  
M: +66 81 938 8130  
E: matthias.bickel@giz.de  
W: www.asean-agrifood.org
Two piloted plants were visited 16 months later after the pilot project ends as part of monitoring and evaluation assessment.

Mr. Jirawat Lotharuckpong

“It is a very competitive market. Customers have different options. If we cannot offer the products upon their requests, they can simply turn their back away. We need to increase our quality and standard to live in this business.

“I now feel more confidence and comfortable taking to buyers. It is like we now speak the same language with buyers since we have improved to meet their internationally recognized standard,” said Mr. Jirawat Lotharuckpong, Managing Director of Takerng Pineapple Industrial Co., Ltd., Thailand.

Mr. Somneug Wantem

“It was difficult in the beginning particularly in changing mindsets and old behaviors.

“Some staff so got used to the same old practices. As the factory opened 27 years ago, there were certain ways of doing things. But, this SGF standard requires all every minor details from the selection of raw materials to production and quality control and assurance to be thoroughly checked, fixed and treated. At start it was very exhaustive, but it is all worth it as our customers are happy with our products,” said Mr. Somneug Wantem, Factory Manager of Pranburi Hotei Co., Ltd, Thailand.

Ms. Napaporn Rattanametta

“As an inspector, I must emphasise that standards are essential as they can position us on the international market. For the manufacturers, standard principles must be in the mind of everyone and adhered to all along the way. Farmers must plant and grow their fruit in the right way to ensure they only sell good products to the factory. In the factory itself, standards must be set for every process and the staff must be sure that every process has met the specified measures,” said Ms. Napaporn, the SGF auditor and project manager on food safety of ASEAN Sustainable Agrifood Systems.