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Cambodia eyes Singapore supermarket shelves to expand agricultural exports

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Phnom Penh is looking to turn Singaporeâ??s modern retail market into a new growth channel for Cambodian rice, fresh produce and processed foods as it seeks to diversify agricultural exports

Cambodia is looking to deepen its presence in Singapore's food market by exploring sourcing opportunities with Sheng Siong Group, one of Singapore's leading supermarket chains. The initiative reflects Phnom Penh's broader push to move Cambodian agricultural products into higher-value regional markets and reduce reliance on a limited number of export destinations. On August 29, Samheng Bora, Secretary of State at Cambodia's Ministry of Commerce and Chairman of the Export Promotion Task Force, held an online meeting with Lin Rui Wen, Executive Director of Sheng Siong Group, to discuss opportunities to promote Cambodian products and strengthen their access to Singapore's retail sector.

The discussions centred on the potential for Cambodian rice, vegetables, fruits and processed foods to meet demand in Singapore. But getting products onto supermarket shelves will require more than production capacity. Officials and the retailer also examined the requirements of modern retail, including food safety, packaging, dependable supply and price competitiveness.

From Production Capacity to Retail Access

For Cambodia, Singapore represents an attractive market within ASEAN not only because of its purchasing power, but also because of its role as a regional trading and commercial hub. Bora said Singapore remains a priority market for Cambodia, with strong demand for safe and high-quality food products. Expanding Cambodian goods in the market could help diversify the country's export base, strengthen recognition of Cambodian brands and potentially create pathways into wider international markets.

The immediate task is to identify Cambodian products with the strongest commercial potential and connect qualified domestic suppliers with Sheng Siong. The Ministry of Commerce said it is prepared to facilitate those connections and help businesses navigate market-access challenges. That approach points to a shift in Cambodia's agricultural export strategy. Rather than

focusing solely on increasing production or finding additional buyers, the country is seeking to build the supply-chain and commercial capabilities required by sophisticated retail markets.

For Cambodian suppliers, the Singapore opportunity could therefore become a test of whether they can consistently deliver products that meet stringent retail requirements on quality, safety, packaging, volumes and price.

Singapore as a Launchpad

The proposed cooperation also has implications beyond the Singapore market. Successful entry into a major modern retail chain could provide Cambodian food producers with a stronger platform for building brands and demonstrating their ability to meet international retail standards. That could prove particularly relevant for processed foods, where branding, packaging and consistency can determine whether a product moves beyond niche sales into mainstream retail.

The Ministry's effort to connect Sheng Siong with qualified Cambodian suppliers is aimed at turning discussions into concrete sourcing opportunities. If successful, the initiative could give Cambodian agricultural and agri-food companies a new route into Singapore while strengthening the country's broader strategy of diversifying trade partners. For Cambodia, the bigger opportunity is not simply selling more rice, fruit or vegetables. It is converting the country's agricultural production base into repeatable, higher-value export relationships—with Singapore potentially serving as an important gateway into the wider regional food economy.