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Meeting Australian biosecurity standards through horticulture irradiation

SURABAYA, 19 April 2024 – Indonesian mangosteens and mangos are some of the best in the world, and Indonesian exporters could soon be able to share their delicious bounty with Australian consumers with new local irradiation services that meet strict Australian biosecurity standards. The breakthrough has come with a new government-backed initiative to get Surabaya-based facility, PT Energi Sterila Higiena, to meet the requirements of both the Australian and Indonesian governments for fruit exports.

In April 2024, the PT Energi Sterila Higiena facility will undergo a comprehensive review from an Australian technical expert and this will be followed by technical training of facility staff in Australia. The project is supported by Katalis, a business development program set up by the Australian and Indonesian governments to help maximise the benefits of the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA).

Paul Bartlett, Director, Katalis said, *“Katalis has been working to accelerate opportunities for mangosteen and mango exports and improve irradiation of Indonesian fresh produce for export into Australia, with firm support from both governments. This activity is just the tip of what is possible, with benefits likely to reach other horticulture industries and potentially other international markets beyond Australia.”*

Initiated by East Java Vice Governor 2019-2024 Dr Emil Dardak, this activity to support closer alignment with Australian biosecurity standards follows an earlier mangosteen scoping study, also supported by Katalis.

In a visit to PT Energi Sterila Higiena on Friday, 19 April, **Indonesian Trade Attache in Canberra Agung Haris Setiawan** said, *“It’s time for more Indonesian products, including from East Java, to go international, and given its close proximity, Australia makes an obvious export destination. Exports play a direct role in driving growth and reducing poverty, and will be beneficial to the economy regionally and at the national level.”*

Also present at the facility, **Simon Anderson, Economic Counsellor, Australian Embassy in Jakarta**, said, *“What we see today here in Tambak Langon is an extension of the benefits of the IA-CEPA in strengthening the offering of Indonesian business and opening the potential to access the Australian market. Just as the IA-CEPA improves market access, it also continues to increase two-way trade and support inclusive growth.”*

Fiona Hoggart, Australian Consul-General in Surabaya, said, *“This activity is a welcome step forward in building trade links between Australia and Indonesia, especially given the strategic location of the activity in East Java. It will also have a significant impact on women, who make up half of agricultural households, in opening up new opportunities.”*

After completing staff training and facility improvements, the PT Energi Sterila Higiena facility, located in Surabaya’s Tambak Langon industrial area, could then be considered for registration as an offshore irradiation treatment provider for fresh produce by the Australian Government.

“We welcome Katalis support to implement our vision to increase the competitiveness of Indonesian export goods through commercial irradiation services that are internationally standardised and recognised. We look forward to working closely with stakeholders in Australia to ensure smooth progress of the activity,” said **PT Energi Sterila Higiena Founder, Dahlan Iskan**.

Indonesia's mangosteens and mangos are in demand around the world. For example, Indonesian mangosteen exports were worth around 75 million US dollars in 2022 (Statista). However, despite demand, Australia's strict biosecurity rules have limited Indonesia's ability to access this market. This new activity will create opportunities for Indonesia's mangosteen and mango growers and exporters, opening up a wealth of new market prospects.

The capacity to irradiate East Javan mangosteens and mangos is expected to attract interest from leading exotic fruit producers in other provinces, including West Sumatera, West Java, and North Sumatera. If successful, it could also encourage investment in irradiation facilities and complementary areas, such as cold storage, and potential connections with Australian providers for support services and training.

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About Katalis

Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) Economic Cooperation Program Katalis (Katalis) is a unique, five-year (2020-2025) government-backed business development program unlocking the vast potential of economic partnership between Australia and Indonesia. Katalis was established under the IA-CEPA and complements other Australian development programs with a commercially oriented, bilateral approach that prioritises gender equality and social inclusion.

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