

INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA POLITÉCNICO GRANCOLOMBIANO

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

**BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE PRODUCTION AND EXPORT OF
FREEZE-DRIED FRUITS FROM COLOMBIA TO GERMANY**

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Background of the Research

Colombia is a country that has a geographical territory with many advantages, and due to that, agriculture plays an important role on the economy of the country, on the fourth quarter of 2024, for example, the economic activity that involves the agricultural, got a vital improvement of 8.1% (Dane, 2024) Colombia has everything, starting with the soil, the weather appropriate conditions and the labor to be the primary exporter worldwide in fruits and vegetables. In recent years, Colombia's role on the export of exotic fruits and vegetables has been remarkable.

On the other hand, it is critical to research the market that dried fruits can offer. In 2023, the exports of dried fruits were 2.8 million (OEC, 2023), positioning Colombia as the 57th country out of 183 responsible for the main exportation of dried fruits. In this same year, Colombia's exportations were mainly targeted to the Netherlands, Germany, the United States, the Czech and Turkey. This is not only an excellent opportunity for Colombia to enrich its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but it is also crucial to improve the job opportunities, the use of the fertile soil of the country and to position Colombia in a much higher exportation position of dried fruits since this is a market that is expected to grow in a 6.4% between 2024 and 2030. Despite all the progress and positive statistics that Colombia has, their global presence is still small in this specific market. Taking Chile as an example, which was the second leading exporter in 2023 in this market, but also, there's Turkey, the first one, and China, the third one (OEC, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The Uppsala model is an empiric way to develop the internationalization; with this method, it is expected to increase a country's chances of exportation on a certain market, however, is not something that is done without a former investigation and research of the market, and it has a structure and steps that need to be carefully followed to achieve this goal. This model uses the acquired experience to create an enhancement on the way a product in a market is produced and, more importantly, the way this product is distributed internationally (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

The steps to consider include the introduction to the market in an occasional way, that involves the lesser implication in this process and as we move forward, this incrimination in the exporting process rises, now, by exports that use a third-party independent representation, and once the goal is achieved, the product that is exported should already have their own branches of exportation in the countries that the product is being exported to. Using this model will allow the possibility to slowly reach other foreign markets and to position the product as the strongest in the industry of dried fruits. Likewise, it is important to use the Uppsala model along with an efficient supply chain. To meet the customer expectations, and their demand, the supply chain needs to be flexible, and as agile as possible, to minimize the fees and tariffs, not only in the export process, but also in the production phase. Therefore, the export strategy of the dried fruit snack involves these two theories, looking to guarantee an organized, low risk process that optimizes the export returns.

Conceptual Framework

The fruit and vegetable market has been impacted by the lyophilization, which is a drying process of the product that, according to studies, does not affect the nutritional facts of the exotic fruit. This is a method that was created in World War II to ensure the transportation of supplies, and since then it has been evolving to preserve the food that was sent to the astronauts for their missions in space. Since nutritional facts are not affected, and the texture and flavor are preserved, freeze-dried products are currently widely not only for the military, health supplies, and food snacks.

The way the lyophilization works is due to a process that involves freezing the product, the temperatures used in this part of the process are really low, then, the moisture is removed in a process called sublimation to make the transition from the ice product to a vapor product without the liquid phase, which guarantees the distinctive features of the finished product. Understanding the background of this process, and the reason why it was such a necessary measure, helps to better target the market, the needs of the consumer and the environment used. The demand for healthy food around the world has been increasing, besides, we live in a world where life requires us to be in constant movement, there's always something to do, and a place to get to (Grand View Research, 2023).

Germany, Canada, and Australia are perfect examples of the population needs on convenient food that is still a way to nourish the body (Grand View Research, 2023). A PESTLE analysis was used as reference to decide which country offers the best opportunities to succeed with the exportation of this specific product. On one hand, there's Germany, this is the largest economy in Europe, and, over the last few years, they

Comentado [MV1]: It will interesting to give some references about this fact.

have been working on the investment of healthy, premium products. By researching on this specific target population, that prioritizes healthy diets and include fruits and vegetables on their diet, the lyophilization is great way to get to this market that in Europe is expected to rise from the USD 26.78 billion that the market was able to collect in 2023, to USD 36.60 billion by 2028 (Research and Markets, 2024). Also, it is important not only to keep in mind the nutritional statistics, but also to keep in mind psychological factors, from this perspective, it is essential to acknowledge that life as was known changed completely after the Covid-19. As humans, our lifestyle has changed, and this is supported by the value that exercise has in our daily life. For example, Europe has been seeing an increasement in hiking activities, and this is a complete market with nutrient requirements that can easily be fulfilled with lyophilization. Canada is no different, this country has a growing consumption and demand for natural snacks, although this is a smaller market compared to Germany, which is one of the main countries Colombia exports lyophilized products to, the market size is studied to expand to USD 15.89 billion by 2029 with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 3.01% during years 2024-2025 (Research and Markets, 2024).

The opportunities found in Canada are the length of the growing season, which is shorter than in Colombia, and, that Colombia has an availability of fruits that will differentiate any ordinary freeze-dried product from exotic fruits, carefully and properly harvest. Lastly, Australia plays an important role in the lyophilizate products, specifically, exotic fruits. Australia is open to new flavors and has an important, strong economy. The Australian touristic industry has been showing an increase, they are receiving people from all over the world motivated by their views, their culture and the diversity that the country has to offer, this is a passive way for this product to have a global reach (Appendix 1,

PESTLE Document).

Objectives

- To develop the required knowledge in international trade procedures and export regulations.
- To learn how to use the different tools that we have available to calculate and quote shippings.
- To strengthen analytical skills through the creation of a comprehensive business plan

Comentado [MV2]: It is necessary to be more specific, it must be related to the products you will export

Methodology

For the development of the business plan focused on exporting Freeze-dried fruits or lyophilized from Colombia to Germany, research was conducted based on reliable sources of foreign trade and international market analysis such as Trade Map, Doing Business, UN Comtrade, Statista, Euromonitor, Pro Colombia, ICEX, OEC (Observatory of Economic Complexity), and Data Bridge Market Research. These sources were complemented with academic and sectoral databases (Appendix 1, PESTLE Document).

The adopted method is structured into five main stages:

- Environmental analysis: Assessment of political, legal, economic, and cultural factors in both Colombia and Germany (Appendix 1, PESTLE Document).
- Market study: Research on the profile of German consumers, consumption trends, competitor identification, and potential demand analysis.
- Marketing plan: Formulation of the market entry strategy, pricing policy, distribution channels, and product positioning.

- Operational plan: Definition of logistics, production, and certification processes necessary to guarantee product quality and compliance.
- Financial plan: Cost estimation, revenue projection, break-even analysis, and profitability evaluation.

Technical Study

The technical study aims to define the operational and logistical aspects necessary for the production and export of freeze-dried fruits from Colombia to Germany. This includes: plant location, production processes, required machinery, certifications, implementation schedule, and initial investment budget.

Market Study

Demand Behavior

Germany is positioned as a highly attractive market for natural and healthy products (Appendix 1, PESTLE Document). According to Grand View Research (2022), the fruit snacks market generated revenues of USD 588.1 million, projected to reach USD 1,067.7 million by 2030, with an annual growth rate of 7.7%.

German consumers value attributes such as: health and convenience, additive-free products, vegan options, long shelf life, organic certifications, and exotic origin.

According to Kim Berg (2024), a nutrition expert, 71% of Germans consume fruits and vegetables daily, a figure significantly higher than the Colombian average, highlighting a culture of conscious and healthy consumption.

Future Potential Demand

Data Bridge Market Research estimates that the global freeze-dried products market will reach USD 15.85 billion by 2029, with an annual growth rate of 5.5%. Germany will require more than 5,000 tons annually of dried fruits by 2027, a significant portion of which will be freeze-dried, driven by their shelf life and nutritional value.

Comentado [MV3]: All this information must have references, it has important data take it by the research you made.

Supply Behavior

According to Mordor intelligence 2025 currently the leading companies in the freeze-dried fruit market are European Freeze Dry, Katadyn Group, LYO FOOD Sp. z o. zoo, AMG Group and Harmony House Foods Inc. Of which European Freeze Dry is the best known and fastest growing recognized especially for its high-quality products and innovation.

Most of these products come from Europe or Asia, featuring local fruits like strawberry, apple, and pear. Tropical and exotic fruits from Colombia have low representation compared to products from Peru or Bolivia, representing a clear differentiation opportunity. Although competitive, the market is increasingly open to innovative, healthy, and certified products.

Location

The production plant is planned to be located in Cundinamarca due to the proximity to fruit collection centers, for example La Calera, Sylvania y Granada, all of these located in Cundinamarca which are associated with the exportation of exotic fruits, both natural and dried (Cundinamarca's government, 2023), also, logistic access to El

Dorado Airport and ports such as Cartagena or Buenaventura, availability of skilled labor, adequate infrastructure for agro-industrial processes (Dane, 2025).

Production Process

The production process includes the following stages:

The production process includes the selection of tropical fruits with high demand, such as mango, goldenberry, dragon fruit, papaya, and banana. (Agrolatam, 2024) and preparing it: washing, peeling, and cutting. Quick freezing at -40°C and after that, freeze-drying process, which includes water sublimation in vacuum chambers in order to avoid losing the nutrients. The next steps include the packaging, labeling, quality control, storage, and lastly, the distribution (Diaita, 2024). These systems include freezing chambers, industrial freeze-dryers, vacuum packers, and sealers. Additionally, the process incorporates quality control stations and comprehensive refrigeration and storage systems.

Required Certifications

GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) – INVIMA, ISO 22000 – Food Safety, organic certification (to access premium niches in Germany), exporter registration in VUCE and in compliance with EU Regulation 1169/2011 on food information.

Table 1. Regulations and Tariff Requirements

| Non-Tariff Barriers for the Export of Products under Tariff Heading 200897 | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| TYPE A | TYPE B | TYPE E |
| A130 – Systems Approach | B310 – Labeling (TBT/OTC) | E100 – Non-Automatic Import Licenses |
| A140 – Import Authorization for SPS Reasons | | |
| A150 – Importer Authorization for SPS Reasons | | |
| A210 – Limits on Residues or Contaminants | | |
| A220 – Restricted Use of Substances | | |
| A310 – Food Safety Labeling (SPS) | | |
| A330 – Packaging | | E125 – Licenses for Public Health Protection |
| A410 – Microbiological Criteria | | |
| A420 – Hygiene Practices | | |
| A630 – Food/Feed Processing | | |
| A850 – Traceability | | |
| A851 – Origin of Materials and Components | | |
| A852 – Processing History | | |
| A853 – Post-Delivery Distribution and Tracking | | |

Own elaboration.

Table 2. Implementation Schedule

| Stage | Month 1 | Month 2 | Month 3 | Month 4 | Month 5 | Month 6 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <i>Machinery acquisition</i> | ✓ | | | | | |
| <i>Facility adaptation</i> | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Production testing</i> | | | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Certification requests</i> | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| <i>Initial production</i> | | | | ✓ | | |
| <i>Pilot export</i> | | | | | ✓ | |
| <i>Evaluation and scaling</i> | | | | | | ✓ |

Own elaboration.

Table 3. Initial Investment Budget

| <i>Concept</i> | <i>Amount (USD)</i> |
|--|---------------------|
| <i>Industrial freeze-dryer</i> | 45,000 |
| <i>Freezing chambers</i> | 12,000 |
| <i>Vacuum packer</i> | 5,000 |
| <i>Plant setup and permits</i> | 8,000 |
| <i>Certifications and registrations</i> | 6,000 |
| <i>Initial logistics and transport costs</i> | 4,000 |
| <i>Working capital (3 months)</i> | 135,000 |
| <i>Total estimated initial investment</i> | 215,000 |

Own elaboration.

Financial Study

This study aims to determine the economic feasibility and profitability of the project through the analysis of revenues, costs, cash flow, and projections.

Initial Financial Assumptions

- FOB selling price per unit: USD 3.11/kg
- Production cost per unit: USD 1.8/kg basing this information on the average costs of this specific product. To determine the production cost, it's important to keep in mind the costs of raw material, the hours that need to be paid in the agricultural industry, the total agricultural costs, and the possible setbacks that soil, weather, and economy can cause. (100gr = 0,55USD, 250gr = 1,00 USD).
- Projected initial export volume: 20,000 units/month
- Expected annual sales growth: 6,7% (CAGR projection from 2025 – 2034)
- Average exchange rate: COP 4,000/USD
- Initial investment: USD 215,000
- Evaluation period: 5 years

Revenue Projection (Year 1)

- Monthly sales: 20,000 units (15.000 units of 100 gr and 5.000 units of 250 gr) × USD 3.11

Table 4. Operating Costs Projection

| <i>Concept</i> | <i>Monthly Cost</i> | <i>Annual Cost</i> |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Production (materials and labor)</i> | USD 36,000 | USD 432,000 |
| <i>Logistics and customs costs</i> | USD 5,000 | USD 60,000 |
| <i>Operating and administrative expenses</i> | USD 4,000 | USD 48,000 |
| <i>Total, Operating Costs Year 1</i> | | USD 540,000 |

Own elaboration.

Break-even Point

Break-even point (in units) = 76.336 units/ year

Fixed costs / (Price – Variable cost per unit) =

USD 100,000 / (3.11 – 1.8) = 76.336 units/year = 6.361 units/month

Table 5. Financial Indicators (5-year period)

| <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Estimated Value</i> |
|---|------------------------|
| <i>Net Present Value (NPV)</i> | USD 125,000 |
| <i>Internal Rate of Return (IRR)</i> | 32% |
| <i>Return on Investment (ROI, Year 1)</i> | 333% |
| <i>Investment Payback Period</i> | 9 months |

Own elaboration.

Marketing

Target Population

The company has identified two main target groups:

1. End consumers:
 - Age: 20 to 45 years old
 - Profile: Professionals, students, and families with healthy consumption habits
 - Location: Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Frankfurt
 - Lifestyle: Active, health-conscious, with medium to high purchasing power
2. Intermediaries and/or resellers:
 - Importers of healthy foods
 - Supermarkets such as REWE, Edeka, Bio Company
 - Specialty stores offering organic, vegan, and health-focused products
 - B2B e-commerce platforms such as Amazon Germany, Kaufland, among others

Marketing Strategy of the Project

1. Pricing Policy:

Although exact prices are not specified, a competitive and profitable strategy is planned, based on logistics optimization and cost reduction through an efficient supply chain. Channel-specific pricing strategy: one price for traditional retail (supermarkets), another for digital B2B (Amazon), and another for direct-to-consumer sales (e-commerce). Volume incentives: offer tiered discounts for large orders, ideal for businesses and distributors, encouraging repeat purchases.

2. Distribution Channels:

Through importers, supermarkets (such as REWE, Edeka, Bio Company), and stores specializing in healthy, vegan, and organic products. B2B sales are also considered through digital platforms such as Amazon Germany or Kaufland. Direct-to-consumer (D2C) platforms: development of a dedicated website with an online store in German and local shipping options from European warehouses (with fulfillment in Germany or the Netherlands). Distribution at organic and vegan product fairs: such as VeggieWorld, Biofach, or Green Week Berlin, where products can be sold directly to consumers and distributors can be recruited.

3. Product Positioning:

The product is presented as healthy, natural, exotic, additive-free, and with a prolonged shelf life thanks to the lyophilized product. It aims to attract German consumers who are health-conscious, active, and have a healthy lifestyle. Part of the strategy is focused on child and school consumption: position the product as a healthy snack for children, aligned with conscious eating trends in German schools. Association with global trends: promote the product as aligned with popular diets such as “plant-based,” “raw food,” or “keto-compatible snacks.”

Branding and Differentiation:

Features such as Colombian origin, the exotic nature of the fruits, the technological process (lyophilized product), and nutritional benefits are highlighted. Brand story with social impact: communicate how fruit cultivation benefits rural communities in Colombia, generating social as well as commercial value. Visual

certifications on packaging and advertising: highlight labels such as “Vegan,” “Non-GMO,” “Fairtrade,” and “100% natural” in the design to reinforce trust and authenticity with the German consumer.

Logistics for Exporting Dried Fruit from Colombia to Germany

Exporting dried fruit from Colombia to Germany involves a carefully structured logistics chain, combining phytosanitary requirements, customs regulations, selection of the means of transport, and a cost analysis to ensure the product's competitiveness.

Customs regulations and requirements. Colombian exporters must be registered with the DIAN (National Tax Agency) and have a Single Tax Registry (RUT) and an export document (DEX). In Germany, as part of the European Union, compliance with Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production is required, as well as health certificates and strict limits on chemical residues (ProColombia, 2023). In addition, labeling in German and correct tariff codes (e.g., 0813.40 for dried fruit, according to the Harmonized System nomenclature) are required.

Product Packaging

Function: Protects, preserves, presents, and ensures regulatory compliance of dried fruit exports.

Primary Packaging (direct food contact):

- Type: Vacuum-sealed doypack, flow-pack, or modified atmosphere bags.
- Materials: PE, PET/ALU/PE, compostable cellulose (eco-friendly option).
- Sizes: 100 g (individual), 250 g (family).

Secondary Packaging (transport):

- Boxes: Recyclable corrugated cardboard with internal dividers.
- Capacity: 12–24 units per box.
- Dimensions: Approx. 40 x 30 x 20 cm.

Comentado [MV4]: It will be interesting to give a graphical idea of this packing process.

Export Loading:

- Pallet: Standard 120 x 100 cm.
- Load: 500–800 kg per pallet, secured with stretch film.

Design and Labeling Requirements (Germany):

- Language: German.
- Must include: Product name, ingredients (indicate absence of additives if applicable), net weight, expiration date, country of origin: Made in Colombia, batch number and traceability, certifications (e.g., Organic, FairTrade, HACCP).

Suggested Visual Design:

- Images: Fresh and dried fruit
- Colors: Natural tones (green, yellow, brown)
- Icons: No added sugar, vegan, gluten-free

Estimated logistics cost analysis (per ton):

- Production and dehydration: USD 1,200
- Packaging and labeling: USD 300
- Internal transportation in Colombia: USD 150
- Ocean freight to Germany: USD 1,500
- Insurance and certification: USD 200
- Customs and logistics costs at destination: USD 400
- Approximate total FOB cost: USD 3,750 per ton

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