

Ceylon Cinnamon Export Market Selection

True Ceylon Cinnamon Quills · HS Code 0906.11 · 3 Markets Compared · 1 Recommendation

This report compares three candidate export markets for true Ceylon cinnamon — the United States, Mexico and Guatemala — scores them across seven weighted commercial dimensions, and recommends the single best first market with the evidence behind it. It ends with a phased entry sequence and a 90-day action plan — giving you a clear, defensible decision on where to start, and why.



PREPARED FOR

Serendib Spice Exports (Pvt) Ltd

Contact: Ruwan Perera

PRODUCT & ORIGIN

True Ceylon Cinnamon Quills

Sri Lanka · HS 0906.11 · Data: Aug
2025–Jul 2026

CAPACITY & REPORT DATE

120 tonnes/year

MOQ: 500kg · August 2026

Contents

From market choice to supporting evidence and a practical first-market action plan

No.	Section
—	About This Report · Purpose, Benefit & Scope
—	Client Brief · Questionnaire & Readiness Summary
1	Executive Summary
2	Factor 1 · Market Size & Growth
3	Factor 2 · Market Access & FTA
4	Factor 3 · Competitive Landscape
5	Factor 4 · Buyer Availability
6	Factor 5 · Landed Margin Potential
7	Factor 6 · Operational Readiness Fit
8	Factor 7 · Payment Risk
9	Overall Market Ranking & Recommendation
10	Action Plan & Phased Entry Sequence
11	Data Sources & Methodology
Appendix A	Production & Quality Statement
Appendix B	Standard Intelligence Disclaimer

Start here

The Executive Summary gives the final verdict and all seven factor scores. Sections 2–8 then follow those same seven factors in exactly the same order, so every score can be traced directly to its supporting evidence.

Purpose, Benefit & Scope

What this £250 assessment is designed to do — and how its evidence becomes a first-market decision

R1 is not a collection of trade statistics. It is a decision tool for an exporter that needs to know which of three candidate markets deserves its time, money and management attention first.

Purpose

The purpose of R1 is to compare three realistic export markets on a consistent evidence base and answer one practical question: **which market should Serendib enter first, and in what order should the others follow?** It combines market demand, access, competition, buyer availability, margin potential, operational fit and payment risk with current-affairs adjustments before a recommendation is made.

Benefit — why this work is worth paying for

The information needed to choose an export market does not sit in one place. A client would have to find and reconcile national trade statistics, licensed international trade transaction data, tariff and regulatory rules, shipping conditions, currency and payment signals, competitive evidence and its own operational readiness.

The value of R1 is therefore not simply finding information; it is knowing which evidence matters, comparing markets on the same basis, exposing the trade-offs and converting that evidence into a defensible entry order. A £250 assessment can repay itself many times over if it prevents resources being committed to the wrong first market.

Scope — the seven dimensions behind the decision

R1 compares the United States, Mexico and Guatemala across seven weighted dimensions. Each answers a different question about market attractiveness and fit. The weighted scores are then combined with the live risk scan to produce the ranking, recommendation and phased entry sequence.

01 Market Size & Growth

Is demand large enough and moving in the right direction?

02 Market Access & FTA

Can the product enter on workable tariff and regulatory terms?

03 Competitive Landscape

How difficult is the supplier and incumbent environment?

04 Buyer Availability

Is there a sufficiently broad and reachable buyer base?

05 Landed Margin Potential

Can the market support attractive economics after logistics and access costs?

06 Operational Readiness Fit

How well does the market match the client's current capability?

07 Payment Risk

How manageable is the market-level payment environment?

Client Brief · Questionnaire & Readiness Summary

Questionnaire summary · what the client told us before research began

This page records the client-supplied starting point used to shape the R1 research. It separates what Serendib Spice Exports told us from the independently researched market evidence and conclusions that follow.

Company & product

Serendib Spice Exports (Pvt) Ltd.

True Ceylon cinnamon quills, Alba and C5 Special grades, dried · HS 0906.11 · Sri Lanka.

Scale & positioning

Approximately **120 tonnes/year** export capacity, available year-round. Premium positioning. MOQ: **500 kg**. Target customer: importer / trading company.

Export readiness

EU and USDA Organic certification and ISO 22000; GlobalGAP in progress. Two-year ambient shelf life; no cold chain required.

Export experience

Approximately **6 years** exporting to the UAE and India through trading agents. No direct Americas experience.

Markets under assessment

United States, Mexico and Guatemala are the three candidate markets assessed in this report.

Decision this report must support

Identify the strongest first export market, explain why the alternatives rank lower, and set the order in which Serendib should pursue them.

How the questionnaire shaped the analysis

Serendib's premium grades, organic certification, 120-tonne capacity, 500 kg MOQ and existing agent-led export experience are used in the Operational Readiness Fit assessment and in judging which market can be entered most realistically first.

Readiness check — AMBER

Serendib is ready to pursue the recommended market, with two specific gaps to close before first shipment: accredited heavy-metal test certificates and an established Americas freight relationship. Both are considered closable within 60 days. The company already has the core product fit, capacity, organic certification, ISO 22000 and ambient shelf-life profile needed for market entry.

Source: client questionnaire information preserved for this fictitious sample report. Client-supplied facts are not treated as independently verified market evidence.

Section 1 — Executive Summary

What this section does: shows the final verdict first, then the seven-factor assessment and arithmetic behind the score before explaining the decision and next actions.

70 GREEN	GREEN - United States is the recommended first market The United States reaches 70/100, just clearing the GREEN threshold. The result is strong enough to support first-market entry, but it is not an unqualified green light: FDA testing requirements and freight economics must be controlled before the first shipment. Mexico remains a very close second at 69/100.
--------------------------------	---

Factor investigated	Weight	Score	Rating	Weighted contribution
1. Market Size & Growth	18%	8/10	STRONG	14.4
2. Market Access & FTA	18%	6/10	MODERATE	10.8
3. Competitive Landscape	13%	7/10	MODERATE	9.1
4. Buyer Availability	13%	8/10	STRONG	10.4
5. Landed Margin Potential	18%	5/10	MODERATE	9.0
6. Operational Readiness Fit	10%	7/10	MODERATE	7.0
7. Payment Risk	10%	9/10	STRONG	9.0
FINAL WEIGHTED SCORE	100%	-	GREEN	69.7 → 70/100

Calculation: (factor score ÷ 10) × factor weight. Contributions are summed unrounded: 14.4 + 10.8 + 9.1 + 10.4 + 9.0 + 7.0 + 9.0 = 69.7, rounded to 70/100. Rating scale: 8–10 STRONG, 5–7 MODERATE, 1–4 WEAK. Overall verdict: GREEN 70+, AMBER 50–69, RED below 50.

USA 70 GREEN · Enter first	MEXICO 69 AMBER · Close second	GUATEMALA 56 AMBER · Later phase
---	---	---

- 1. Which market should you enter first?** The United States. It is the world's second-largest importer of true Ceylon cinnamon (US\$58.3 million in 2024), it is growing at nearly 12% a year, it pays a premium for the organic certification you already hold, and it is the easiest of the three markets for you to serve in English with low payment risk.
- 2. What are the alternatives, and why are they ranked lower?** Mexico is the world's largest Ceylon cinnamon market (US\$82.5 million) and remains duty-free for whole quills. But it contracted 7.5% in 2024, buying is concentrated in a few large importing houses supplied by entrenched Sri Lankan exporters, and the 2026 customs reform has raised the compliance bar. It is your natural second market, not your first. Guatemala is loyal to Ceylon cinnamon but is a far smaller market whose ports are currently in crisis, with vessel waits of up to 45 days — enter only when congestion eases.
- 3. The two biggest risks in the US market, and how to manage them.** First, FDA heavy-metal scrutiny of cinnamon: ship with heavy-metal test certificates from a LAAF-accredited laboratory to reduce detention risk and support release if FDA testing requirements apply. Second, freight cost volatility via the Panama Canal, where draft limits are tightening: quote prices with a freight adjustment clause and book sailings early.
- 4. What would change this recommendation?** If the FDA were to impose a country-wide import alert on Sri Lankan cinnamon, Mexico would become your first market. If Mexico's non-FTA tariff decree is widened to include spices when renewed for 2027, the case for the US strengthens further.
- 5. The single most important action this week:** Commission heavy-metal (lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury) testing of your Alba and C5 Special grades at a LAAF-accredited laboratory. This one document unlocks the US market and reassures every buyer you approach.
- Recommended next report:** R2 Market Entry Intelligence for the United States — a single-market deep dive covering import regulations in detail, distribution channels, pricing structure, and the practical entry route for your grades.

MARKET OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT

Seven-Dimension Scoring with Current Affairs Adjustments

DIMENSION	WEIGHT	USA	MEXICO	GUATEMALA	KEY INSIGHT (SUMMARY)
1. Market Size & Growth	18%	8	6	6	USA: large market with strong growth. Mexico: largest market but recent contraction. Guatemala: much smaller opportunity.
2. Market Access & FTA	18%	6	6	8	USA: favourable tariff access; FDA testing adds burden. Mexico: duty-free but customs complexity. Guatemala: 0% duty access.
3. Competitive Landscape	13%	7	6	6	USA: diversified origins and room for premium niches. Mexico: entrenched Sri Lankan incumbents. Guatemala: fewer established suppliers.
4. Buyer Availability	13%	8	7	4	USA: broad diversified buyer base. Mexico: proven channel but concentrated. Guatemala: limited importer pool.
5. Landed Margin Potential	18%	5	7	4	USA: premium opportunity but higher freight. Mexico: strong unit value and manageable shipping. Guatemala: port costs reduce margin.
6. Operational Readiness Fit	10%	7	6	5	USA: certification and English-language fit. Mexico: Spanish capability required. Guatemala: similar needs at smaller scale.
7. Payment Risk	10%	9	8	7	USA: strongest payment environment. Mexico: manageable currency/payment risk. Guatemala: port delays can strain working capital.
8–10 STRONG 5–7 MODERATE 1–4 WEAK					

OVERALL MARKET RANKING

USA 70 GREEN · BEST FIRST MARKET	MEXICO 69 AMBER · CLOSE SECOND	GUATEMALA 56 AMBER · LATER PHASE
STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION: USA first → Mexico second → Guatemala third.		

Section 2 — Factor 1 · Market Size & Growth

What this factor asks: is demand large enough, and is it moving in the right direction?

8/10	STRONG — United States The US combines world-scale demand with the strongest current growth of the three candidates.
------	--

Global imports of true Ceylon cinnamon (HS 0906.11) were roughly US\$300 million in 2024. Mexico was the largest candidate at US\$82.5 million / 7,420 tonnes, while the United States imported US\$58.3 million / 9,380 tonnes and grew 11.9% year on year. Guatemala was much smaller at approximately US\$7.2–7.5 million.

Why the US scores 8/10: Mexico is larger, but its market contracted 7.5% in 2024. The US is the second-largest market and has positive momentum, making it the strongest blend of scale and growth for a first move. Guatemala is commercially relevant but too small to lead the strategy.

Market	2024 imports	Growth / trajectory	Assessment
United States	US\$58.3m / 9,380 t	+11.9% · Rising — Strong Now	Best balance of scale and momentum
Mexico	US\$82.5m / 7,420 t	–7.5% · Mature — Premium Stable	Largest market, but recent contraction
Guatemala	~US\$7.2–7.5m	Stable · Mature — Premium Stable	Useful later-stage niche

Section 3 — Factor 2 · Market Access & FTA

What this factor asks: can the product enter on workable tariff and regulatory terms?

6/10	MODERATE — United States Tariff access is favourable, but FDA compliance creates a real pre-shipment control point.
------	---

Whole Ceylon cinnamon quills enter all three shortlisted markets at 0% duty in the assessment used for this report. The difference is therefore not headline tariff alone; it is the regulatory and customs burden around entry.

For the United States, the principal issue is FDA scrutiny of cinnamon and the need for accredited heavy-metal test certificates before shipment. Mexico remains duty-free for whole quills but its 2026 Customs Law reform raises documentation risk. Guatemala is also duty-free, although operational port conditions make practical access less attractive.

Current-affairs bridge: sanctions/tariff alerts and product-specific regulatory changes are applied to this factor in the scoring methodology. The live scan dated 13 August 2026 found no market-wide prohibition that prevents entry to the recommended US market.

Section 4 — Factor 3 · Competitive Landscape

What this factor asks: how difficult is the supplier and incumbent environment?

7/10	MODERATE — United States Competition is real, but the buyer base is more diversified and less locked to a small group of incumbent relationships than Mexico.
------	---

Sri Lanka is effectively the sole origin for true Ceylon cinnamon, so the relevant competition is primarily between Sri Lankan exporters rather than between producing countries.

Mexico is highly attractive but harder to penetrate: Sri Lanka supplies 86.7% of the market and shipment records show repeated 15–16 tonne consignments to a small number of established importing houses. Winning share therefore often means displacing an incumbent supplier. In the US, the premium, organic and traceable-product segment offers more room for a new supplier with Alba and C5 Special grades and USDA Organic certification.

Why the US scores 7/10: the market is competitive, but its diversified channels and premium segment create a credible point of differentiation beyond price.

Section 5 — Factor 4 · Buyer Availability

What this factor asks: is there a sufficiently broad and reachable buyer base?

8/10	STRONG — United States The US offers the broadest practical buyer pool for Serendib's premium organic positioning.
------	--

The US assessment identifies several reachable buyer types: organic retail brands, speciality food distributors, premium private-label packers and import/trading companies. That breadth matters because Serendib is not dependent on winning one or two dominant accounts.

Mexico has substantial demand but buying is more concentrated among established importing houses; the report's scoring comparison gives buyer availability scores of 8 for the US, 7 for Mexico and 4 for Guatemala. Guatemala's smaller scale naturally limits the number of realistic prospects.

Commercial implication: the US gives Serendib more ways to test the market, learn buyer requirements and build references without making the first programme dependent on a single relationship.

Section 6 — Factor 5 · Landed Margin Potential

What this factor asks: can the market support attractive economics after access and logistics costs?

5/10	MODERATE — United States The premium opportunity is attractive, but freight and compliance costs need to be proven before the first shipment.
------	---

Average 2024 unit values in the comparison were approximately US\$6.2/kg for the United States, US\$11.1/kg for Mexico and US\$11–13/kg for Guatemala. Those averages are market indicators rather than Serendib's achievable selling prices.

The US case depends on selling above the market average into premium organic channels, where Alba and C5 Special grades and USDA Organic certification have commercial value. Against that upside, Serendib still needs a firm Colombo–US freight quotation and must budget for accredited testing. Guatemala is weakened by severe Pacific-port congestion, with reported waits of up to 45 days and delivered-cost increases of up to 35% in the evidence used for this report.

Why the US scores 5/10: the margin opportunity is credible but not yet fully de-risked; freight and testing are the two numbers that must be locked down before commitment.

Section 7 — Factor 6 · Operational Readiness Fit

What this factor asks: how well does the market match the client's current capability?

7/10	MODERATE — United States Serendib is fundamentally ready, with two specific and manageable gaps rather than a capability rebuild.
-------------	---

The Client Brief records the starting position: approximately 120 tonnes/year export capacity, year-round availability, EU and USDA Organic certification, ISO 22000, GlobalGAP in progress, around six years of export experience, and a two-year ambient shelf life with no cold-chain requirement.

For the US, the two identified gaps are accredited heavy-metal test certificates and an established Americas freight relationship. Both are considered closable within 60 days. Mexico would additionally require Spanish-language selling capability, a competent customs-broker relationship and a tougher incumbent-displacement effort.

Why the US scores 7/10: most of what the market requires is already present; the remaining work is specific, visible and achievable before first shipment.

Section 8 — Factor 7 · Payment Risk

What this factor asks: how manageable is the market-level payment environment?

9/10	STRONG — United States The US has the strongest market-level payment-risk profile in the three-market comparison.
-------------	---

The scoring comparison gives the United States 9/10 for Payment Risk — the highest individual score in the recommended-market assessment. This is a market-level judgement only; R1 does not assess the creditworthiness or payment history of individual buyers.

The live current-affairs scan also checks currency and economic instability because these conditions can affect payment risk. For a first move, the US provides the clearest combination of transparent commercial practice, a deep banking environment and lower market-level payment uncertainty than the alternatives considered here.

Boundary: individual buyer credit checks, payment terms and transaction-level risk controls belong in later buyer/market-entry work and must not be inferred from this market score.

Section 9 — Overall Market Ranking & Recommendation

What this section does: brings the seven factor chapters back together, shows the overall ranking, and states the recommended first market.

70/100	GREEN — United States first The US is the strongest overall fit for Serendib now, narrowly ahead of Mexico at 69/100. Guatemala scores 56/100 and is a later-stage option.
---------------	--

The recommendation is not based on market size alone. Mexico is larger, but the US combines positive growth, broader buyer availability, lower payment risk, a more accessible competitive structure and a closer fit with certifications Serendib already holds.

What would change the recommendation: a country-wide FDA import alert on Sri Lankan cinnamon would materially weaken the US case. Conversely, a future Mexican tariff change affecting spices would strengthen the relative US position. These are watch items, not current blockers.

Section 10 — Action Plan & Phased Entry Sequence

What this section does: converts the seven-factor assessment into a practical 30 / 60 / 90-day programme, with an owner and success metric for every action, then sets the order in which the three markets should be pursued.

Phase 1 · United States Months 0–6 · Close readiness gaps, prove compliance and freight economics, then open premium-organic buyer outreach.			
Phase 2 · Mexico Months 6–18 · Use the US track record, add Spanish-language capability and a competent customs broker, then target established importers.			
Phase 3 · Guatemala Month 18+ · Treat as an opportunistic add-on once port conditions are acceptable and the Americas lane is established.			

Timeline	Action	Owner	Success metric
Days 1–30	1. Commission heavy-metal testing. Test Alba and C5 Special grades for lead, arsenic, cadmium and mercury at a LAAF-accredited laboratory.	Serendib QA	Certificates in hand covering current production lots.
Days 1–30	2. Obtain freight quotations. Secure written quotations from two forwarders for Colombo to the US East and West Coasts, comparing Panama Canal and Pacific routings.	Serendib Logistics	Two written quotations with transit times and surcharge terms.
Days 1–30	3. Register with the US FDA. Complete foreign food facility registration and confirm spice-import requirements with a licensed customs broker.	Serendib Admin	FDA facility registration number issued.
Days 31–60	4. Prepare a US-facing offer sheet. Present grades, organic certificates, test certificates, MOQ, and FOB/CIF prices with a freight-adjustment clause.	Serendib Sales	Offer sheet approved and in use.
Days 31–60	5. Ring-fence working capital for first consignments. A 5-tonne premium-grade shipment may tie up roughly US\$45,000–60,000 in stock, freight and credit terms for 60–90 days. Confirm this cash is available without straining operations.	Serendib Finance	Working-capital allocation confirmed in writing.
Days 61–90	6. Open outreach to US organic and speciality importers. Begin targeted conversations once compliance evidence, freight economics and the offer sheet are ready.	Serendib Sales	First 10 buyer conversations opened.
Quarterly	7. Maintain the market watch list. Review the FDA Sri Lanka alert list, Mexico tariff-decree renewal, Panama Canal draft advisories and Puerto Quetzal congestion.	Serendib Management	Watch log reviewed and updated each quarter.

Recommended next report: R2 Market Entry Intelligence — United States.
A single-market deep dive covering import regulations in detail, distribution channels, pricing structure and the practical entry route for Serendib's grades.

Section 11 — Data Sources & Methodology

What this section does: full transparency — every source used, when the data was accessed, and how the scoring framework works.

Data accessed 13 August 2026.

Principal sources: UN Comtrade national trade statistics (via GTAIC market reports); DataMexico (Secretaria de Economia) for Mexican import values by origin; WITS / World Bank for Guatemalan historical imports; WTO Tariff and Trade Data for Sri Lankan export totals; licensed international trade transaction data supplied from Eximpedia (August 2025 – July 2026) for named trade flows, consignment sizes and unit values.

Regulatory and risk sources: US FDA import alerts and public health advisories; USTR Federal Register notices and the American Spice Trade Association for US tariff treatment; the Mexican 2026 tariff schedule (LIGIE) and Customs Law reform commentary; the Central American Common Tariff schedule; UK FCDO travel advisories; Panama Canal Authority advisories; Kuehne+Nagel port operational updates; Agexport port congestion reporting; central bank and Trading Economics currency data; IMF Sri Lanka programme reviews.

Methodology: candidate markets are scored 1–10 across seven weighted dimensions — Market Size and Growth (18%), Market Access and FTA (18%), Competitive Landscape (13%), Buyer Availability (13%), Landed Margin Potential (18%), Operational Readiness Fit (10%), and Payment Risk (10%). Scores are evidence-based judgements, not mechanical calculations, and reflect this client's specific commodity, grades and capability.

A live current affairs and shipping intelligence scan was run on 13 August 2026 and its findings were applied as stated score adjustments before totals were finalised.

Appendix A — Production & Quality Statement

This report was produced using proprietary research and analytical methods, with full analyst review and sign-off by Anthony Wolff, Founder, TradeMatch Pro Ltd.

Appendix B — Standard Intelligence Disclaimer

ABOUT THIS REPORT This report has been produced by TradeMatch Pro Ltd exclusively for the contracting client named on the cover. It is provided for general commercial intelligence purposes only.

WHAT THIS REPORT IS NOT This report does not constitute legal, financial, regulatory, tax, customs, sanctions, or investment advice of any kind. It is an analytical intelligence product designed to inform commercial decision-making. It is not a substitute for independent professional advice.

THIRD-PARTY DATA SOURCES This report may incorporate data obtained from government publications, trade databases, commercial information providers, shipping record aggregators, and other publicly available sources. TradeMatch Pro exercises reasonable care in selecting and interpreting these sources but does not independently verify every underlying data point. Third-party data may contain errors, omissions, or inaccuracies beyond our control. TradeMatch Pro accepts no liability for inaccuracies, omissions, delays, or changes affecting third-party data sources.

DATA CURRENCY The intelligence in this report reflects market conditions, trade flows, regulatory requirements, and commercial circumstances at the time of production. Export markets, tariffs, sanctions regimes, buyer relationships, payment environments, and regulatory frameworks can and do change after delivery. TradeMatch Pro accepts no responsibility for changes occurring after the report delivery date.

TRADE FLOW AND BUYER DATA Where this report references trade flow volumes, buyer import activity, or company profiles, these are indicators derived from historical shipping transaction data. They are not guarantees of current trading status, buyer intent, creditworthiness, or future purchasing behaviour. Buyer contact details are provided for legitimate B2B commercial outreach purposes only.

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OBLIGATION The client is required to conduct its own independent commercial, legal, regulatory, financial, and due diligence investigations before entering any contract, extending credit, making any investment, or committing resources on the basis of this report. This report is one intelligence input into that process. It does not replace the client's own judgement and verification.

THIRD PARTIES This report is produced solely for the contracting client. TradeMatch Pro owes no duty of care to any third party. No third party may rely on the contents of this report. The client must not share this report with any third party without the prior written consent of TradeMatch Pro Ltd, as set out in the Terms and Conditions of Service.

FORECASTS AND ASSESSMENTS Where this report contains forward-looking assessments, market opportunity estimates, risk verdicts, or strategic recommendations, these represent analytical judgements based on information available at the time of production. They are inherently uncertain and may not materialise. No warranty is given as to their accuracy or completeness.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, TradeMatch Pro Ltd's liability in connection with this report is limited to the fee paid for it. TradeMatch Pro accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or economic loss arising from reliance on this report.

End of Report

R1 Market Opportunity Assessment · Ceylon Cinnamon · Serendib Spice Exports

Prepared by TradeMatch Pro Ltd · Confidential · August 2026