



# Trinidad and Tobago



## Significant Achievements 2020

- The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) participated actively in an Agriculture Task Force convened by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) as part of a national high-level Post-COVID-19 Recovery Roadmap Committee. Led by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the committee pursued an ambitious goal to develop a new economy and society. Seven thematic areas were prioritized, including agriculture, with special emphasis on reducing the high level of dependence on food imports. IICA played an instrumental role in drafting and finalizing the Agriculture Roadmap report on behalf of the Agriculture Task Force.
- IICA's partnerships with government agencies, institutions, NGOs and communities, as well as its hands-on technical support, resulted in tangible and meaningful contributions to national efforts to bolster farming as a way to increase food security during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - IICA assisted in coining the GrowTrinbago name and logo as well as in developing the content for and designing six crop production leaflets. This added great value to MALF's distribution of gardening seeds among 50,000 households. The National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) also featured the GrowTrinbago logo on the food boxes it distributed.
  - The Institute worked together with seven residents representing over 25 households to successfully transform an abandoned play park into a productive sub-urban community food park in Arima. IICA provided funding for materials and delivered practical training. The park, which includes rainwater harvesting systems, wooden composting units and raised garden beds, was funded under IICA's Special COVID-19 Fund for the Caribbean Region.
  - Under IICA's Special COVID-19 Fund for the Caribbean Region, a mechanized hand-held tiller was donated to WHYFarm. This enhanced the NGO's capacity to provide timely, cost-effective and labor-saving support in the preparation of garden beds, benefitting over 60 young and new farmers in at least five rural communities.
- Through a strong technical partnership with The Cropper Foundation (TCF), within the framework of its IDB-funded "Making agriculture profitable and sustainable" project, work was undertaken to develop an app that facilitates traceability and allows for tracking on-farm production costs. The app will enable farmers to record costs, input use, farm assets, operations and good agricultural practices aligned with food safety standards in a simple, accessible and user-friendly manner. Relevant agricultural institutions, including the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), MALF and NAMDEVCO will be able to access the information recorded in the app, which will contribute to increasing the reliability of farm-related data.
- IICA built up stakeholders' capacity to transition from manual to digital operations:
  - The Alliance of Rural Communities of Trinidad and Tobago (ARCTT) and WHYFarm, two farming, food processing, marketing and distribution NGOs, received an IICA-TCF grant to strengthen their e-marketing capabilities amidst a surge in online purchases and greater demand for home delivery of local fresh food products during the COVID-19 lockdown. Upgraded websites will improve the efficiency of on-line purchases as well as boost the visibility and sales prospects of farmers in the communities they serve.
  - Under IICA's Special COVID-19 Fund for the Caribbean Region, MALF's St. Augustine Nursery (SAN) was provided with a small grant to create an online product catalogue as the first step towards developing full capacity for online inventory management, sales and delivery of seeds and seedlings of vegetables, tree crops and ornamentals. Going digital will enable SAN to meet the demand for seeds and planting material, while contributing to public health and safety amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Multiple stakeholders benefited from applied experiences in the strategic leveraging of micro grants



and partnerships aimed at supporting micro and small agricultural entrepreneurs and groups through advocacy and training opportunities:

- o Moruga Hill Rice Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. received funding under IICA's Special COVID-19 Fund for the Caribbean Region to design a product logo, a label for a new pouch package, a promotional video and communication materials to acquire a trademark from the Intellectual Property Office of Trinidad and Tobago.
  - o A joint project between IICA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) enabled the Tobago Agro Processors Association (TAPA) and the Trinidad and Tobago Beekeepers' Association (TTBA) to redesign package labels as well as develop promotional banners, videos, TV commercials and billboard advertisements. Over 150 members benefited from market research in and training activities related to governance, innovative marketing and market requirements for their respective products.
  - o A total of 62 stakeholders benefited from an IICA-coordinated AgriMSE WhatsApp group, which serves as a valuable platform for providing peer-to-peer support, building relationships and interacting with other businesses. The products of 9 group members were promoted on the well-known Cup of Joe TV program, sponsored by the IICA-TCF partnership.
- IICA demonstrated its technical leadership in agricultural health and food safety standards and protocols for international trade. IICA provided access to information and facilitated the participation of over 300 public and private sector stakeholders in hemispheric webinars delivered together with the USDA, including sessions on the OIE Code and the FDA Produce Safety Rule. The goal was to enhance knowledge, capabilities and professional networking among IICA's partners and allies. The webinars also provided an opportunity to exchange information on the impact of COVID-19 and mechanisms to overcome the pandemic.

- Continuous technical support was provided to NAMDEVCO as part of its two-year process to develop the National TT-GAP standard TTS 648:2020, which seeks to strengthen food safety and quality assurance for locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables. TT-GAP provides local farmers with a relevant guide that describes best practices, requirements for and key aspects of comprehensive food safety management systems for the production of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- The Argentinian Embassy, MALF and related entities established contact with one of Trinidad and Tobago's largest and most experienced fresh produce distributors to explore bilateral trade opportunities between Argentina and Trinidad and Tobago. IICA facilitated this dialogue as well as the acquisition of a 5-year data series on apple and pear imports to assess the potential to import fresh produce from Argentina.
- IICA and exportTT expanded their partnership by organizing capacity-building events on the USDA Food Safety Modernization Act, to raise awareness among exporters of requirements to access the Canadian agri-food market. The IICA Delegation in Canada, exportTT and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency collaborated to host a successful webinar entitled "Exporting safe food to Canada" in late 2020, which underscored the need to be prepared to comply with the required food safety standards for successful market access.
- A new partnership was established with the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund and the IAMovement NGO to implement a climate-resilient agriculture project, which seeks to assist vulnerable rural communities in adopting nature-based solutions to reduce non-climatic stressors that contribute to land degradation and to establish or expand viable green businesses. Vetiver grass for land stabilization and other climate-smart farming practices are expected to generate positive impacts, such as reducing pollution in waterways and coastal and marine areas. NGOs and other community-based organizations have collaborated in implementing project actions in five communities across Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia and Tobago.

