



Trinidad and Tobago

2019
Annual Report

Significant Achievements

- IICA provided isolated and vulnerable rural communities with an appropriate option for sustainable and resilient food production systems, with the construction of a 10 ft. x 8 ft. demonstration unit, using locally available, low-cost construction material. The Matelot Community Unit, the first of the Garden Pool models to be completed in Trinidad and Tobago, is currently equipped to produce 132 heads of lettuce or other leafy greens in 6 to 8 weeks and has a built-in aquaponics system that supplies animal protein from pond-raised tilapia. Community engagement was an important aspect of the project, with twenty-two students and farmers receiving training in 3D design principles for the development of climate-smart production systems.
- The Institute fostered chain integration in the cocoa industry, by assisting stakeholders from all critical links in the industry to establish a dedicated forum for participatory dialogue, decision-making, as well as coordinated and collective development actions. IICA's technical guidance and support to the Cocoa Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (CDCTTL) resulted in the formal launch of a Cocoa Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Platform. Over 20 stakeholders have taken ownership of this effort and have expressed keen interest in benefiting from lessons learned from similar mechanisms in Guatemala, Peru and Ghana.
- IICA's continuous engagement, direct technical assistance and financial resources have enhanced the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) to strengthen its capacity to manage and respond to a major and priority farming risk – flooding. Direct outputs included the acquisition of tree inspection (Resistograph, the first for Trinidad and Tobago), cutting and removal equipment; updating of the MALF's computerised system on backlogged flood claim forms from farmers; and the establishment of a demonstration plot at the MALF to show the benefits of vetiver grass as a biological slope stabilizer for soil erosion. The Institute also provided support to the MALF Agricultural Disaster Risk Management Plan and facilitated specialised training of MALF staff, focusing on community resilience, vulnerability and capacity assessment; incident command operations and on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.
- IICA strengthened business capacities, networking and opportunities for business-to-business exchanges for a core group of AgriMSEs and business service providers. Six AgriMSEs were provided with tangible opportunities for product promotion and marketing. They were each given subsidized booth space at the annual, flagship Trade and Investment Conference of the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA), while also benefiting from the organization of a development and business services



networking session and a Christmas gift package initiative, which marketed selected products to institutional partners and others. Overall, the IICA project allowed a core group of twenty AgriMSEs to access critical information and facilitated strategic dialogue with financiers, distributors and business planning coaches to enhance their product development capacity and understanding of regulatory requirements (food safety, food testing, packaging, labelling).

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) commissioned IICA's technical services to organise and document experiences and lessons from a study tour with the Trinidad Cassava Industry Steering Committee. Tour participants included representatives from several key links in the cassava value chain—including input suppliers, farmers, processors and marketers—as well as the Tobago Cassava Products Limited, which has been described as a major driver of agri-business development in Tobago. The report outlines the characteristics of the actors in the Tobago cassava value chain, within a Pluralistic Market-Oriented Service model, and identifies the development needs of the TCPL Board to ensure the ongoing capacity to strengthen chain integration and enable industry growth.
- The Institute strengthened its partnership with the state entity, the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), for technical cooperation and support in building agricultural health and food safety (AHFS) capacity. The collaboration included the training of 85 fresh produce farmers, exporters and other support agencies, to better plan and comply with US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations for fresh produce exports. With respect to local marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables, IICA's support included development of the TT Good Agricultural Practices (TT-GAP) standard for on-farm food safety and quality assurance. It also organised the first public stakeholder consultation to obtain feedback on the draft TT-GAP, with a view to finalizing the standard and developing guidance documents.
- Eleven webinars for the Codex Committees for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) and two private sector virtual colloquiums for Ministry of Health Food and

Drug technicians and public and private sector stakeholders facilitated ongoing networking and information exchange between local regulatory authorities, the private sector and international food safety committees. Funding by IICA enabled TT stakeholders to participate in two face-to-face colloquiums (Brazil and Costa Rica) and in a Food Hygiene Codex Committee meeting in Ohio. These opportunities contributed to more informed decision making and enabled more effective representation of the country's AHFS priorities in national¹, regional and international discussions.

- A South-South cooperation initiative for cocoa industry development was undertaken between TechnoServe Peru and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded Cacao Seguro project in Peru, on the one hand, and cocoa experts from Trinidad and Tobago's Cocoa Research Centre (CRC), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Cocoa Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd., and other entities. Highlights of the exchange were a discussion on advances by the CRC in the mitigation of cadmium in cocoa, as well as information exchange regarding developments in San Martin, Peru, where TechnoServe is working. Areas for collaboration between the two countries on cadmium mitigation strategies in cocoa-growing soils, as well as training in cocoa quality evaluation were also explored.
- The not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, The Cropper Foundation (TCF), extensively utilized IICA's technical expertise to develop a pricing model, in collaboration with NAMDEVCO, to estimate contractual buying and selling prices for selected fresh vegetables, under the "Making Agriculture Profitable and Sustainable" project, which is jointly funded by the TCF and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The project aims to provide small-scale farmers with more formal access to local, high value markets. TCF also relied on IICA's expertise to strengthen food safety capacities, through the training of 40 MAPS project farmers in pesticide management for sustainable farming, in collaboration with NAMDEVCO and the Ministry of Health, and to provide technical support for testing and assessing farm produce to be supplied to supermarkets.

1. MALF- Zoonotics Task Force and National Food Safety Coordinating Committees.