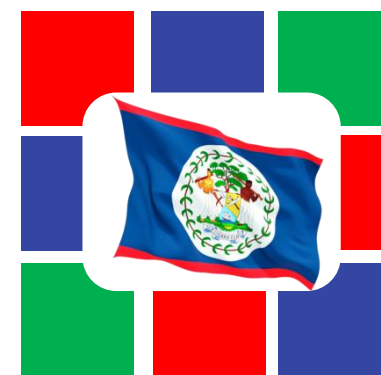


Agriculture Policy Programme Caribbean Action



Belize



**Country
UpDate**

APP Country Update – Belize

The Update highlights contributions of the APP from actions under the Scale Down Work Plan, that were grounded in-country with direct benefits to local stakeholders.



Local youth provided with opportunity to promote their enterprises and expand their business networks

- Kadeem Bennett was fully funded under the APP to participate the Youth in Agriculture (YiA) Business Forum as part of the D4D in Grenada [18th – 22nd January 2016]. The Forum targeted youth who own and operate agribusinesses and/or manage and play a vital role in a family-owned agricultural enterprise. Through the YiA Forum, Mr. Bennett was exposed to other business youth from the rest of the Caribbean, and they are now part of a post-forum youth-driven vibrant ‘network’.

The Grenada YiA Forum also provided more opportunities to inform of and promote their business to their peers and agri-stakeholders in the Region and to be the start of a YiA database designed to ensure that they are targeted for subsequent opportunities for further training under the APP and other development initiatives. The young agripreneurs who participated in the YiA Business Forum have established a social network using the WhatsApp platform, through which they have maintained contact, continue to share valuable information and are pursuing options for commercial ventures. This networking platform has expanded as they have added other young agripreneurs to the group. Their open and genuine commitment to pass on the knowledge gained by providing training and mentoring to other youth at the national and regional level, the post-forum continuity achieved through the networking platform provides a good basis for continuity and sharing of the knowledge and benefits started in Grenada.

- Jamaal Reed also given the opportunity to engage with regional planners to propose solutions to hindrances experienced by agripreneurs at the Component 1 (CCS) 9th Regional Planners Forum (RPF) on Agriculture, held in Trinidad and Tobago from June 7 – 10, 2016. As part of the RPF, a hybrid programme of the Creativity for Employment and Business Opportunities (CEBO) tailored to youth agripreneurs, was introduced and tested. This effort is a follow up to the APP-supported YiA Business Forum held in January 2016, and provided participants with tools for improving business operation and competitiveness. It is anticipated that building institutional capacity and fostering policy dialogue with youth farmers will assist in the development and implementation of policies and other initiatives to support young farmers in Belize and the wider Caribbean region.

Support provided under. . .

Component 1 – CCS: ‘Support Involvement of Women and Youth in Dialogue on the Region’s Agriculture Issues’

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Component 2 – CARDI:

&

Component 3: ‘Strengthen and link existing fora for multi-stakeholder dialogue to widen regional exposure and networking opportunities for small producers/ entrepreneurs’

Agriculture Planners get more opportunities for regional and international policy networking

Milagro Matus of the Ministry of Agriculture was afforded the opportunity to participate in the 9th Regional Planners Forum on Agriculture from 7th to 9th June 2016 where she took the opportunity to engage and network with peers in the Region and dialogue and exchange information of critical topics for agricultural policy response. The 9th RPF also provided the opportunity for MoA officials to be introduced to a hybrid programme of the Creativity for Employment and Business Opportunities (CEBO) tailored to youth agripreneurs.

Support provided under. . .

Component 1 – CCS: ‘Support for policy capacity building and networking through a Regional Planners Forum (RPF)’



July 2016 ~ 1 ~ APP/PMU
The Intra-ACP APP is funded under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF)



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Corn farmers' access to climate-ready and improved planting material enhanced

Work to establish the validation plots for corn continued in during the last quarter (April – June) of 2016. Validation and/or evaluation trials are mainly focused drought tolerance and on productivity of local and improved varieties. To date, a ½ acre drought tolerant evaluation plot was established in April 2016 using 8 varieties of white and yellow corn, including NB-6, Icta B1, CARDI YC-001, Purple corn, Antonio-Valley of Peace, Bejuco-Valley of Peace, Carlos-wc and Vanegas yellow. The plots were established at a farmer's plot (Antonio's farm) in the Valley of Peace area. The objective is to compare yield potential of the improved varieties (NB-6, CARDI-YC 001) with farmer's varieties. Plots have also been established on a farmers holding in La Gracia and at the CARDI Field Station (Central Farm, Cayo District). Crop maintenance and data collection ongoing and harvesting is expected in August 2016. These farmers, members of their producer groups and from the wider community will benefit directly from the research trials being undertaken through these plots.

- This activity is ongoing and will continue to the end of the APP in December 2016.

Support provided under. . .

Component 2, CARDI :
'Establish crop validation & evaluation trials for commercial & food value and adaptability to extreme weather conditions'

Sweet potato germplasm maintained on ex-situ conservation plot

Ex-situ plots established on farmers' fields (in La Gracia in 2015) for corn (variety NB6) continue to be maintained during 2016. This includes implementation of agronomic and cultural practices (weeding, fertilizing, irrigation and pest and disease control). These plots will continue to be maintained to supply planting material to farmers in Belize and as a gene bank for corn material for the Region. These are the only germplasm banks for corn in CARIFORUM and the improvements in the management of same, and research results generated will be important for future research as well as for supply of improved planting material to local farmers and producers around the Region.

Support provided under. . .

Component 2, CARDI :
'Establish ex-situ conservation plot for selected crops of commercial and food value'

Farmers participate in national and regional validation workshops for corn and root crops respectively

National one day workshops will be conducted during July-September in Belize to demonstrate and share information with the farmers the initial results of the validation trials (Corn). Participants from Belize will also attend two regional workshops; one for roots crops and the other for small ruminants in Antigua and Jamaica respectively in September 2016. The results of all the validation trials conducted throughout CARIFORUM countries evaluated.

Support provided under. . .

Component 2, CARDI :
'National and Regional Workshops; Farmer Field Visit for training in management of improved germplasm and animal breeds (agencies & producers)'

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Small producers will be exposed to the benefits of appropriate small-scale equipment and improved practices

A number of small farmers will be exposed to the benefits of appropriate small-scale equipment and improved practices for land preparation. A harrow for tilling the soil was procured and delivered in April 2016. This harrow has been used to demonstrate cost effective technology as opposed to manual tillage that is currently time and labour consuming.

Support provided under . . .

Component 2, CARDI :
'Procure and demonstrate use of small scale equipment, tools and machinery for training demonstrations '

SME's receive technical assistance and equipment to support product development

- Nineteen (19) Beekeepers from the Cayo Quality Honey producers Cooperatives (CQHPC) will be provided with 150 hives which will all be constructed in Belize. This will increase the current capacity to a total of 460 hives. The CQHPC was selected for being one of the few coops in Belize with a functional structure in place and a long history in honey production. This equipment is necessary for the expansion of apiaries and increasing production and will be an integral part of trainings, in GAP and standards in hive management. Use of these improved hives will support the development of the apiculture value chain in the Belize by providing direct assistance in the form of to farmers to boost the production of honey and honey products. This activity will be coordinated by the NVCF in collaboration with the delegation in IICA Belize.
- Local Belize producers will also construct 175 hives for beekeepers in The Bahamas as part of the support to MSMEs. These hives are constructed according to the 10-Frame Langstroth Beehive model. The shipment of the hives to The Bahamas will ensure that requirements related to agricultural health are observed, i.e., pre-treatment with the appropriate and accepted fumigation/treatment of the beehives.

Support provided under . . .

Component 3, IICA: 'Purchase and distribute small-scale processing and packaging equipment to support improved product handling, presentation and quality for select agri-food processing MSMEs'

Producer groups and networks capacity for governance and value chain development supported

A local National Value Chain Facilitator has been hired to support development of the Apiculture value chain in Belize. Mr. Margarito Hermenejildo Leiva has been assigned for a period of six months, to support honey producer group enterprises in areas related to production, group development and access to finance. Mr. Leiva has participated in an APP Regional Producer Group/Enterprise Governance and Group Dynamics training workshop [April 25-27, 2016] in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. At that workshop NVCFs received expert orientation on producer group governance, dynamics, financial assessment tools, and Good Agricultural Practices, and contributed to the development of subsequent training modules in Producer Group Organizational Development/ Dynamics - all to support their delivery of technical assistance to commodity-based producer groups.

Support provided under . . .

Component 3, IICA: 'Direct technical assistance to selected producer groups and commodity-based enterprises for value chain development through National Value Chain Facilitators'

- **The NVCF will be in-place until September 2016.**

July 2016 ~ 3 ~ APP/PMU



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MSMEs exposed to regional producer-buyer networks

Mr. Margarito Hermenejildo Leiva participated in the *Strengthening Producer-Buyer Relationships: Networking Platform Experiences and Strategy Meeting* held in St. Lucia during the period 27-28 June, 2016. It was designed to facilitate joint planning and sharing of information so as to improve the organizational capacity of producer, women and youth through their insertion into value chains. The aim of the dialogue platform is the removal of obstacles to the production, marketing and distribution of commodities and to build capacity and institutional frameworks and systems for value chain development. The meeting in St. Lucia benefited from the already established producer-buyer relationship which exists between Massy Stores Saint Lucia and several local producers and was the focus of discussions. Experiences of producer-buyer relationships in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana was also highlighted.

Support provided under . . .

Component 3, IICA: 'Support National Producer-Buyer Networking and Group Governance Building activities'

SME's receive support to conduct financial investment profiles

Selected enterprises from among the honey producers will be assessed in terms of credit-readiness and qualifying enterprises will undergo an investment profiling. The local NVCF has already been provided with initial training/orientation by FAST expert in enterprise credit-readiness assessment and investment profiling tools at the C2-C3 April 25-27, 2016 workshop in Saint. Vincent and the Grenadines. NVCF application of tools and final assessments of selected local qualifying honey producer enterprises will be completed by end of August 2016, in preparation for engagement with Financial Institutions (FIs) during the C3 Regional agri-Value Chain Finance Forum to be held in Jamaica in September 2016. This is being undertaken within framework of C3 FAST-IICA and CaFAN-IICA-CARDI LoAs.

Support provided under . . .

Component 3, IICA: 'Prepare Financial /Investment profiles for selected commodity based Industries to strengthen information baselines and stakeholders engagement on value chain financing in CARIFORUM'

Directory of major enterprises in the apiculture and pineapple value chain published

Sixteen (16) organizations within the apiculture value chain and twenty one (21) organizations within the pineapple value chain were featured in an APP Directory of major CARIFORUM producer groups, buyers and service providers. The Directory includes the contact information for key producer groups, supermarkets, restaurants, traders, exporters, agro-processors, and input suppliers involved in these commodity-specific chains. Forty (40) copies have been made available for distribution to stakeholders in Belize and the Directory will also be made available online in APP partner and Ministry of Agriculture websites.

Support provided under . . .

Component 3, IICA: 'APP Directory of major CARIFORUM producer groups, buyers and service providers'

Regional APP Actions with Benefits at Country Level

Action/Component	Brief Description
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Upgrade the Regional Agribusiness Platform (Carib-Agri Website www.agricarib.org) and support capacity of producers to use same for business and trade-related information</p>	<p>An upgraded website has been delivered to the CARICOM Secretariat. Website content uploads are being done, and a presentation will be made to Planners in the 9th Regional Planners Forum in June 2016, in Trinidad & Tobago</p> <p>Local stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the content for the website.</p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Upgrade/expand the existing web-based Institutional Directory and Activity Integration Map developed under a previous IICA-CTA project</p>	<p>The consultancy is advanced and a presentation will be made to Planners in the 9th Regional Planners Forum in June 2016, in Trinidad & Tobago. The Platform targets key agricultural development agencies which are part of the umbrella Agriculture Food and Nutrition Cluster (AFNC) and that provide development support to the sector. The information already gathered/provided by these agencies on their activities and initiatives will be coded and included in the database to enhance stakeholder knowledge on what's happening and foster greater institutional coordination.</p> <p>Local stakeholders are encouraged to contribute information on projects to enhance the database.</p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Support AFNC (one F2F), virtual coordination meetings, logistics, communications</p>	<p>CARDI as Chair of the AFNC has been leading the process to manage monthly virtual meetings addressing a number of areas that are supported directly under the APP as well as complementary actions by other institutions. Since the start of 2014, a smaller core of agencies, comprising CARICOM Secretariat, IICA, FAO, CDB, UWI, OECS Secretariat, CRFM, CARPHA, CaFAN and CABA have been holding monthly coordination meetings, of which four have been face-2-face. With support from the APP, in its short life the AFNC has managed to establish itself as a credible mechanism to foster collaboration on agency work activities to minimize overlaps and accelerate consensus on solutions to tackle common issues. Given that these key institutions provide direct support to agriculture in the countries, these meetings facilitate open dialogue and information sharing which could impact on delivery of support in country or could be based on sharing of successful experiences in country that could be replicated. Under the AFNC, teams have been created to champion the development process of priority commodities. These priority commodities and the lead agency are (a) Small Ruminants (CARDI), (b) Roots & Tubers (FAO), (c) Herbs & Spices (CABA)</p> <p>Local stakeholders are encouraged to make input through the CARICOM Secretariat and their local IICA and/or CARDI office, or directly through any of the key AFNC members.</p>

Regional APP Actions with Benefits at Country Level

Action/Component	Brief Description
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing]</p> <p>Strengthen Coordination meetings, logistics, communications of the 4Thematic Groups (TGs)</p>	<p>The 4 TGs meet virtually and F2F on matters relating to their portfolio. As part of their functions, these TGs would need to liaise at the country level to determine the status of activities/initiatives being undertaken by Ministries of Agriculture, and other national, regional and international agencies, relating their specific portfolio. Countries have an important role in this information gathering process. The TGs and their lead agencies are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Agricultural Health and Food Safety Systems (CCS) 2 Business Development (IICA) 3 Climate Change & Natural Resource Management (FAO) 4 Human Resource, Research & Development (CARDI) <p>Local stakeholders are encouraged to make input directly to the lead agencies identified.</p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - completed]</p> <p>Examine the adequacy of market infrastructure with focus on small producers</p>	<p>This study was grounded in five (5) countries - Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St, Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago. It sought to determine whether existing ‘physical facility or tangible facilitating arrangements’ are adequate to permit the flow of agricultural products from farm-gate to consumer. ‘Adequacy’ was measured from the supplier (farmer, retailer and/or vendor) and the buyer (individual consumers, retailers/wholesalers) perspectives, as well as any intermediary, for example packing houses. Based on the findings of the country assessments, several recommendations were offered for improving market infrastructure that will simultaneously improve the outcomes for vendors, including small producers and experiences for consumers.</p> <p>The recommendations should be reviewed as part of the process for developing national agriculture policy and plan.</p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - close to completion]</p> <p>Develop a Regional Policy framework for the Cassava-Based Industry</p>	<p>Initially, the ToR identified five (5) countries - Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname, to be ‘case studied’. While these are generally representative of the difference in the agricultural sector in CARICOM, there is recognition by the Consultant that this would not provide a sufficient basis for making policy for the entire Region. The new proposal would allow for the capture of salient aspects of the industry development in a wider regional sample, by grouping the countries in Haiti, Mainland countries (Belize, Guyana, Suriname) and other CARICOM countries (including the OECS and Barbados). Hence the role of IICA and CARDI offices in facilitating the Consultant with the information and experiences gathering process will be an important factor in ensuring success of this activity.</p> <p>The recommendations and approach to commodity-based industry development should be reviewed in the context of the recently initiated support to development of a national agriculture policy and plan.</p>

Regional APP Actions with Benefits at Country Level

Action/Component	Brief Description
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Develop a Regional Policy Framework and a Business Plan for a Coordinating Mechanism for Herbs & Spices Industry</p>	<p>The countries to be ‘sampled’ as the basis for generating the body of information for analysis and recommendations will be specified on the submission of the Consultant’s Inception report. Given the regional thrust to develop links to the hotel and hospitality industry and the prominence of this industry in several countries of the region, while not all countries will be ‘sampled’ in the effort to develop of a regional industry development plan and coordinating mechanism, the results of this activity will have direct benefits for further enhancement of existing agri-tourism linkages throughout countries of the region.</p> <p>The initial findings should be reviewed as part of the current process for developing a national agriculture policy.</p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Assess business facilitation mechanisms with a focus on trade limiting policy measures and transportation services systems</p>	<p>Given the longstanding priority placed on ‘alleviating’ these trade and logistical constraints, it is expected that the results of consultations will have direct application to countries’ efforts at systematically strengthening business and trade facilitation mechanisms for intra-regional trade in agricultural products.</p> <p><i>This activity was launched in March 2016 and will conclude in October. Local officials will be consulted during the process of country-visits and will have an opportunity to input into the recommendations.</i></p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Build capacity of policy planners to integrate Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change (CC) Adaptation into national agricultural development policies & programs</p>	<p>While only a limited number of countries will receive direct support in this area, in the form of development of Drought Hazard Annex to existing National Disaster Risk Management Plans, the process, experiences and information generated from the support will be shared and transferred to other countries in the Region. This can be done through regional training activities, including the Agri-Planners Forum, as well as incorporated into the planned national level support for developing policy frameworks and plans at the national (country) and industry levels (cassava, herbs & spices).</p> <p><i>This activity was launched in March 2016 and will conclude in October. Local officials will be afforded an opportunity to review the findings and recommendations, including the Drought Hazard Annexes to Disaster Risk Management Plans, being developed for Saint Lucia and Grenada.</i></p>
<p>[C1 - CCS - ongoing] Support Policy Networking and Knowledge Transfer through a Regional Agricultural Planners Forum</p>	<p>More structured opportunities will be provided for planners in Ministries of Agriculture to network and dialogue on a continuous basis as the main tool to strengthen their capacity to undertake routine planning functions, foster consensus for decision making on critical issues on the regional agenda and as a vehicle for transferring knowledge on specific policy-related topics through virtual and F2F training activities</p> <p>Activities continue in 2016.</p>

Regional APP Actions with Benefits at Country Level

Action/Component	Brief Description
<p>[C2 – CARDI; close to completion] Study/validation meetings on harmonization of trade standards for movement of select crop & animal livestock germplasm in the region</p>	<p>Through two separate, but complementary studies under C2, both completed in July 2015, CARDI is contributing to efforts at modernizing existing rules and regulations concerning trade in plant and animal material for easier movement while, at the same time, maintaining the lowest level of risk with respect to the transfer of pests and diseases within CARIFORUM. A F2F technical review meeting on plant germplasm trade protocols (to be convened on 7 December 2015) will explore the pest status and the risk of transmission for six priority crops, and a range of suitable options were selected and presented through six crop-specific “Protocols for the Transport of Disease-Free Planting Material in CARIFORUM”. The outcomes of this meeting and action on an agreed way forward will have far reaching implications for countries which have expressed an interest in obtaining improved germplasm for roots and tubers from both countries within and outside the region. A similar technical review will be undertaken for animal germplasm and given the current concerns with the spread of AI disease in poultry, the findings and recommendations of the protocols for moving animal germplasm across the region become even more relevant.</p> <p>The recommendations and protocols should be reviewed as part of the current process for developing a national agriculture policy.</p>
<p>[C3 – IICA; close to completion] Experience capitalization on successful CARIFORUM-based financing schemes involving small producers/ entrepreneurs in value chains’</p>	<p>CARIFORUM countries will benefit from specific case studies and short videos of the successful value chain financing mechanisms. These experiences will be documented and used for knowledge transfer and promotion to other countries in the region. Among these are the financing mechanisms and experiences in the white potato and onion industry in Jamaica and the production input loan and marketing scheme spearheaded by MASSY STORES in Saint Lucia. The two consultancies are intended to contribute to the enhancing of understanding of innovative agri-value chain financing schemes for MSMEs, the pivotal role of supportive government policy and engagement and successful collaboration with financial institutions, in order to catalyse changes in practice, help others not to repeat errors and facilitate the design of new interventions that are evidence-based.</p>
<p>[C3 – IICA; planning in progress] ‘Regional Agri-Value Chain Financing Forum to strengthen stakeholders engagement on Value Chain financing in CARIFORUM countries’</p>	<p>A number of local stakeholders, including producer enterprises and one Development Finance Institutions, will get the opportunity to engage with their peers and colleagues from the region as well as international experts, when Jamaica hosts the Regional Agri Value Chain Financing Forum in September 2016. The forum, hosted in collaboration with FAST, and the IICA Flagship Project on Competitiveness and the CTA, will include representatives from national and regional financial institutions, representatives of commodity producer, women and youth organizations and technical professionals from CARIFORUM countries.</p>

Regional APP Actions with Benefits at Country Level

Action/Component	Brief Description
<p>[C3 – IICA; planning in progress] Working Capital Fund study for selected commodity based Industries</p>	<p>Representatives of Producer Groups, National Value Chain Specialist and local Development Finance Institutions will be invited to participate in a regional focus group meeting in August to determine the quantitative and qualitative parameters for a fund that would facilitate access to working capital needed by farmers who are participating in the CaFAN-lead Regional Roots and Tuber (Sweet Potato, Dasheen) Export Programme.</p>