



©FAO SLC

STRENGTHEN THE TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO SUPPORT THE COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

January 2021

SDGs:



Countries:

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago

Project Codes:

TCP/SLC/3702

FAO Contribution:

USD 200 000

Duration:

1 May 2019 – 31 December 2020

Contact Info:

FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean
FAO-SLC@fao.org



Implementing Partners

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat,
Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Beneficiaries

CARICOM and OECS governments and citizens benefit from the contributions of young professionals in Regional Economic Organizations (REOs). REOs benefit from the input of young professionals to programmes being implemented. The young professionals benefit from on-the-job training and exposure during their tenure in the REOs.



Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

The CPF for Antigua and Barbuda Government Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security Output, 1.2. Nutrition awareness and education programme strengthened; Bahamas Government Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security and Safety Output, 1.4. National School Feeding Programme strengthened with FAO support of FAO; Barbados Government Priority 3: Youth Development; Belize Government Priority 2: Food and Nutrition Security, Output 2.1. Access to healthy school feeding programmes with FAO support; Dominica Government Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security, Agricultural Health and Food Safety, Output 1.5 National Agricultural and Food Systems Development Strategy developed and implemented with FAO support; Grenada Government Priority 2: Food and Nutrition Security, Output 2.1. Improved nutrition and school feeding programme for healthy eating habits with linkages to local farmers; Guyana Government Priority 3: Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Hinterland and Rural Development, Output 3.1. Institutional and technical capacities of national agencies, hinterland and rural organizations including women and youth strengthened for sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries, hinterland and rural development; Jamaica Government Priority 2: Food and Nutrition Security, Output 2.2. Nutrition strategies developed and systems supported to reduce non-communicable diseases (NCDs); Saint Kitts and Nevis Government Priority: Food and Feed Systems, Output 1.5. Policy framework strengthened to support sustainable agriculture development, Output 1.6. Enhanced national capacity in collection, analysis and dissemination of food and agriculture data and information; Saint Lucia Government Priority 1: Access to land, food and decent employment, Output 1.3. National programme on youth entrepreneurship developed and implemented with FAO support; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Government Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security, Output 1.2. Nutrition education promoted nationally; Suriname Government Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security, Output 1.2. Strengthened nutrition programmes on healthy food choices targeting school-aged children and youth.

BACKGROUND

Caribbean countries are faced by many challenges with regard to food and nutrition security, including high levels of overweight and obesity, a significant incidence of NCDs, vulnerability to the effects of climate change and natural hazards, and environmental degradation. In response to these challenges, ministers of agriculture at the 35th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean requested FAO assistance to strengthen CARICOM and OECS in terms of the region's food and nutrition security policies. REOs such as CARICOM Secretariat and the OECS Commission play an important role in articulating and implementing the region's agriculture and food and nutrition policies, as well as in coordinating the work of development partners in the sector.

The current project sought to respond to this request by developing the capacity of young professionals at the OECS and CARICOM Secretariats to assist CARICOM and OECS member states to coordinate the implementation of regional and national food and nutrition security policies. The recruitment of young professionals was intended to build capacity and to give young people first-hand knowledge of the priority issues, as well as exposing them to the approaches and strategies used to address the above-mentioned challenges and providing them with an opportunity to inject new ideas and thinking into the sector. The project aimed to build competencies in areas such as networking, integrative thinking, leadership and collaboration. The training and exposure provided would also be a means of planning for future generations of young professionals who wish to contribute to the development of CARICOM.

IMPACT

The young professionals who participated in the project are better equipped and qualified to work in a range of fields related to food and agriculture. They have gained first-hand knowledge of the priority issues germane to agriculture and food and nutrition security. The experience has also exposed them to the strategies used to address challenges and provided them with opportunities to share new ideas. They have had the opportunity to work with and be mentored by key actors in the agriculture and cross-cutting sectors, who influence policy at the highest level. Their training and exposure will serve to motivate other young professionals to pursue a career in agriculture, ensuring that the governments in the region have a cadre of persons to better inform them at national and regional levels on current and trending issues.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

All project outputs were successfully delivered. The young professionals recruited by the project were able to actively learn, participate and contribute to the development of policies and to be involved in agricultural development and implementation strategies for the Caribbean. They supported the monitoring and evaluation of activities and ensured regular updates and stocktaking of activities implemented under National Food and Nutrition Security Policies and Action Plans in member states, as well as facilitating the establishment of a regional stakeholder platform for food and nutrition security (CARICOM/OECS Commission). Their presence in the two Secretariats increased capacity in the area of food security and sustainable agricultural development. Flagship regional initiatives also received timely support for follow-up and coordination with FAO, while the coordination and implementation of regional programmes were strengthened.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

Project implementation was challenged by the length of time it took to complete the recruitment of the two young professionals. Despite this, all activities were conducted within the budget and no additional funds were required. Envisaged risks included the discontinuation of support for the young professionals in the REOs, as a result of changes or movement of key personnel at political and technical levels in the REO or a lack of suitably qualified young professionals. A further risk was reduced interest and commitment on the implementation of the programmes caused by a cessation of funding or delays in securing funding to support the programme. These risks did not materialize.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

Draft OECS Animal Health, Food Safety and Plant Protection Bills providing harmonized regulations for the movement of agricultural products within the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union have been sent to the individual member states. Following adoption at cabinet level they should be considered for regional adoption.

An Agriculture Disaster Risk Management (ADRM) Audit was conducted for selected member states. Resource should be mobilized for the conduct of ADRM audits in additional member states.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The partnerships between FAO and the CARICOM and OECS Secretariats have been strengthened as a result of the project. Regional plans have been developed that are based on mutual cooperation and all discussions have been geared towards improved sustainable development in the sub-region.

2. Gender equality

In order to ensure gender equality and balance during project implementation, gender implications were considered in all interventions.

3. Technological sustainability

The knowledge gained will be an asset both to the young professionals and to CARICOM and OECS.

The young professionals will be available to share their knowledge and expertise with the countries of the region.

4. Economic sustainability

The two young professionals were stationed at the CARICOM Secretariat and the OECS Secretariat, respectively. The products developed during their period of employment will be of great use to the countries of the region.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ **R. Blair and E. Sandiford.** CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-food Action Plan. CARICOM Secretariat. 18 pp.
- ❑ **E. Sandiford.** CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-food Risk Management Framework. CARICOM Secretariat. May 2020. 21 pp.
- ❑ **E. Sandiford.** CARICOM Secretariat - 'Did You Know' Feature, 6 October, 2020 Edition.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	To end all forms of malnutrition (particularly obesity) and achieve all internationally agreed goals related to the eradication of hunger and food insecurity by 2030, in keeping with Sustainable Development Goal 2		
Outcome	The OECS and CARICOM Secretariats facilitate regular, coordinate and high-quality technical assistance to the Caribbean countries in the area of food security and sustainable agricultural development		
	Indicator	Number of countries that have sound policy measures in place to support their commitment related to the eradication of hunger and food insecurity in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 2.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	6	
Comments and follow-up action to be taken	The project support the development of a number of policies and programmes both nationally and regionally to support the countries towards this goal. This efforts needs to be supported and sustained by all stakeholders in order for the outcome to be achieved. Most of the countries are faced with serious challenges, ranging from high debt, high unemployment and some major social issues. Any gains made were recently eroded by the severe climate events and the global COVID-19 pandemic. Follow-up action should include the operationalization and implementation of some of the policies and strategies developed for these small developing states to ensure that they can keep afloat in these rapidly changing times.		
Output 1			
OECS and the CARICOM Secretariat increase their capacity with qualified, motivated and better prepared young professionals in the area of food security and sustainable agricultural development			
Indicators		Target	Achieved
Number of regional / national capacity building processes for each CARICOM and OECS country by government ministries with the assistance of young professionals.		2	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	The OECS and CARICOM Secretariats benefitted from the posting of two young professionals (one in each organisation) from the project. The Ministries of Agriculture received assistance in the designing of a methodology to assess the current structures, systems and procedures to determine the effectiveness of their planning function and service delivery. Support was provided through CARICOM to assist Member States with the development of national food security response plans to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Roots and Tubers Commodity group, the Climate Change Disaster Risk Management and Natural Resource Management group (Regional thematic groups) were able supported. The young professionals also supported the establishment of Public Private Sector linkages throughout the period.		
Activity 1.1			
Development of regional/national capacity-building processes for each CARICOM and OECS country by government ministries with the assistance of young professionals			
Achieved	Yes		
Comments	Methodology was designed to assist ministries of agriculture to assess their current structure, systems and procedures in order to determine the effectiveness of their planning function and service delivery. The assessment will serve as a useful platform for knowledge transfer among Permanent Secretaries. The intervention is expected to be fully implemented in 2021. CARICOM Secretariat was supported in coordinating meetings for the Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA). This is the premiere event on the agriculture calendar. The upcoming CWA will be held virtually and will include an element for the online training of areas germane to regional sector development. CARICOM Secretariat was supported in preparing briefs for Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) meetings. COTED is the decision-making body in CARICOM on trade matters that also affect small and rural producers in the region.		
Activity 1.2			
Development of work plans for implementation of regional/national capacity-building by government ministries with the assistance of young professionals			
Achieved	Partially		
Comments	Support was provided through CARICOM to assist member states with the development of national food security response plans to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Over eight countries benefited from the intervention. Significant assistance was provided to the Roots and Tubers Commodity group and the Climate Change Disaster Risk Management and Natural Resource Management Thematic group throughout the period. Public-private-sector linkages were established and technical assistance provided to upgrade the roots and tubers value chain.		

Activity 1.3	Capacity-building processes of OECS/CARICOM technical teams implemented with the assistance of FAO, other United Nations Agencies and partners	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>Coordination support was provided towards the implementation of a Letter of Agreement (LoA) between OECS and FAO for Enhancing Institutional Capacities in Statistical Data Collection and Analysis in the Agriculture Sector in OECS Member States. This LoA aimed to strengthen the policy formulation and planning function of ministries of agriculture in six OECS member states through the re-engineering of the agricultural statistical systems.</p> <p>The development of the "I Am Agriculture" concept for CARICOM was coordinated with support from the World Food Programme (WFP) to showcase young agri-entrepreneurs' success stories: project to be launched in January 2021.</p>
Activity 1.4	Development of regional forums, national food and nutrition committees and/or inter-ministerial committees	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>Young professionals provided strong support to CARICOM Secretariat to develop the CARICOM COVID-19 Agri-food Risk Management Committee. All FAO member countries are represented. Support was provided to convene the OECS Intra-regional Trade Working Group. This group was formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its primary function is to provide technical guidance on the needs of member states and to develop strategies for regional food security through increased intra-regional trade and cooperation. The Working Group is functional and meets on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Support was provided towards the reconvening of the OECS Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Sub-committee, originally formed to provide guidance to the OECS Commission during the development of the OECS Draft SPS Bills, guidelines and policy. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was recognized that additional guidance was required from the sub-committee because of the accelerated thrust towards intra-regional trade in response to the pandemic and the possibility of shortages resulting from shocks on the international food market.</p> <p>Support was provided to coordinate inter-agency collaboration meetings and follow-up on key outputs. This included FAO/Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture/OECS collaboration and support for an FAO/OECS initiative to transform sub-regional agriculture through the development of prioritized investments to be implemented at both national and regional levels.</p>
Activity 1.5	Development of a regional platform for food and nutrition security	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>The CARICOM Action Committee on Food and Nutrition Security Platform was developed and launched through a LoA between FAO and the CARICOM Secretariat. Fourteen member states are represented as focal points on the platform. Other regional institutions, such as the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), are included.</p> <p>A Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Tool was developed to serve as a benchmark for member states over time on their rate of implementation relative to National Action Plans. The initial baseline assessments will be published in 2021.</p>

Output 2	Flagship regional initiatives of OECS and CARICOM (including promotion of youth in agriculture, shipping initiatives, SPS standards and plant/animal quarantine procedures and statistics) received timely support for follow-up and coordination with FAO		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	The number of proposals and policy documents prepared to assist the countries. Number of communication materials and mechanisms for sharing knowledge and information among FAO, CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Commission, national and regional beneficiaries developed.	5	Yes
Baseline	3		
Comments	The technical expertise of the young professionals was utilized and their gained valuable knowledge in supporting the development of a number of sub-regional initiatives. Working with the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency valuable experience in the preparation of Terms of Reference for sourcing funds from donors was obtained		
Activity 2.1	Relevant regional and national stakeholders in CARICOM and OECS countries for participation in regional initiatives are identified		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The CARICOM Statistics Unit was supported in identifying participants for the Food Insecurity Experience Scale training as part of a LoA. Support was provided to the 'CARICOM - capacity-building in the statistical sector' project funded by the Italian Agency for Development Corporation. Several topics covered the area of agricultural statistics.	
Activity 2.2	Collaboration between key CARICOM and OECS stakeholders at various levels in the areas of SPS standards, plant/animal quarantine procedures and statistics is facilitated to identify appropriate regulations and protocols to be harmonized as well as the best way forward for harmonizing the legislation and protocols		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Support was provided to the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency to develop Terms of Reference to mobilize resources from CDB to facilitate the development of protocols and guidelines to encourage intra-regional trade for a selected range of agri-food products. Support was provided towards the coordination of training in nematology provided to plant quarantine officers in Saint Lucia by the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative. The activity is coordinated through the OECS agriculture desk. A funding proposal was developed to support SPS development in OECS, through the provision of equipment and training to enhance plant quarantine officers' capacity to fully utilize the Caribbean Plant Diagnostic Network. Support was provided toward the development of a time-bound SPS harmonization document to support intra-regional trade in agricultural goods in response to expected disruptions in imported food supply as a result of the pandemic.	
Activity 2.3	Development of a draft proposal for the development and implementation of common regulations by key CARICOM and OECS stakeholders		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Model legislation for the Caribbean Group of Pesticides Board was developed for discussion by member states. Support was provided to follow up with member states on the recently finalized OECS Animal Health, Food Safety and Plant Protection Bills. These draft Bills are intended to provide harmonized regulations for the movement of agricultural products within the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union. The draft bills were sent to the individual member states for adoption at cabinet level, after which they will be considered for regional adoption.	
Activity 2.4	Review and finalization of proposal for the development and implementation of common regulations by key CARICOM and OECS stakeholders		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The "Trade in Animal and Animals Policy", which was supported by development partners, was reviewed and edited. The policy intention is to promote a region-wide harmonized approach, including legislative requirements to risk assessment, to facilitate intra-regional trade in animal and animal products.	

Activity 2.5	Development of communication materials and mechanisms for sharing knowledge and information among FAO, CARICOM Secretariat, OECS Commission, national and regional beneficiaries	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>A proposal was developed for an annual OECS Youth in Agriculture forum, beginning in 2021. The forum is proposed as a complement to the continuous work undertaken in the area. It is intended to highlight youth innovation, resourcefulness and tenacity within the agriculture sector, and to serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas and support. Components of the forum include a) a business pitch competition through which seed capital will be awarded, b) media promotion of youth agribusinesses, and c) a series of webinars. Youth entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to network and connect with key support agencies and resources. Young professionals were the main authors for three chapters of a CARICOM Youth Entrepreneurship Webinar series. The Webinar training focused on themes surrounding opportunities for investment in agriculture, marketing agricultural produce and managing agribusinesses.</p> <p>The Caribbean Agribusiness Website was redesigned and upgraded to facilitate a marketing information portal with the aim of encouraging intra-regional trade by linking buyers and sellers. The Caribbean Agribusiness Facebook page was managed, with regular updates. The Facebook page communicated news and other successes in agriculture from across the region. Numerous countries and other stakeholders have also begun to use the page to post content.</p> <p>Coordination and technical support were provided for the promotion of backyard gardening and healthy eating habits to combat NCDs and build a healthy relationship with food as part of disease management. The OECS Commission, through the OECS Intra-regional Trade Working Group, encouraged the promotion of backyard gardening as a means to reduce household food and nutrition insecurity. Additionally, through a partnership with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and the World Diabetes Foundation under the Diabetes Prevention and Care Project, numerous families throughout OECS member states were provided with garden boxes, tools, seedlings and technical assistance to create backyard gardens.</p> <p>Support was provided to the OECS Commission towards the development of an online marketing platform. This included researching and coordinating demonstration meetings with subject matter experts. It was ultimately decided to tailor and utilize an existing procurement platform rather than to build a separate virtual marketplace for agriculture.</p>
The platform is designed and launched in CARICOM and OECS countries and feedback, inputs and good practices from project stakeholders are elaborated for replication		
Activity 2.6	Achieved	Partially
	Comments	An Eastern Caribbean Trade Corridor investment profile was developed and put forward for discussion. This investment profile is one of five investment profiles developed that target OECS countries.

	Other activities undertaken		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 2.7	Comments	<p>Support was provided to finalize the project proposal for the OECS/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Blue Bio Trade Project. The project aims to empower small-scale coastal producers, i.e. artisanal fishermen, fisher associations and cooperatives, producer groups, micro, small and medium processing enterprises, and exporters from select OECS member states, to produce and trade queen conch products sustainably through the application of Blue Bio Trade principles and criteria.</p> <p>Drafting support was provided on behalf of FAO for the United Nations SDG Fund, which was successful both for Component 1 funding and for concept note development funding for Component 2.</p> <p>In-country support was provided to FAO projects implemented at national level, particularly in Saint Lucia. The project also led in the preparation of multiple Briefs and Concept Notes on behalf of the CARICOM Secretariat.</p> <p>Support was provided to the African, Caribbean and Pacific TradeCom II project, implemented through OECS. Stakeholder consultations were held with member states and Terms of Reference for value chain assessments were developed for three identified priority agricultural commodities across six OECS member states. The results of the value chain assessments will inform future interventions in the sub-regional agriculture sector.</p> <p>The Sub-regional Coordinator was supported in preparing FAO's contribution to the United Nations Sub-regional Multi-sectoral Response Plan for the COVID-19 Pandemic and a Corporate Policy Brief on COVID-19 and Small Island Developing States.</p> <p>WFP was assisted in the design and execution of two rounds in the CARICOM, FAO WFP COVID-19 Agriculture and Livelihood Impact Survey. The project led in the dissemination of survey results to member states.</p> <p>The project reviewed and provided comments for three FAO-related studies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural transformation in Guyana 2. Suriname country report - COVID-19 FAO's response 3. Improving agriculture's response to food security in Trinidad and Tobago - a project of the FAO and United Nations Development Programme. 	
Output 3	Strengthened coordination and implementation of regional programmes related to climate change, disaster risk and natural resource management, roots and tubers for the agri- cluster and the Agriculture Plan of Action for OECS.		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of communication materials developed and knowledge sharing systems created to facilitate communication among FAO, CARICOM and the OECS, national and regional counterparts to ensure complementary and sustainable joint work plans.	2	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	These documents were prepared to address the growing emergency situations facing the sub-region as a consequence result of climate change resulting in more frequent hurricanes and other disaster events and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic of the agriculture, health and food security situation.		
Activity 3.1	Support provided to countries to prepare ADRM plans at national and community level in selected countries		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Support was provided to complete Volume II of the Emergency Response Strategy and Action Plan for Agriculture. This document was amended to cater for threats to the agri-food system such as those presented by COVID-19.	
Activity 3.2	Audit tool implemented in selected countries		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Support was provided to Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, WFP and other partners in the development of the CARICOM COVID-19 logistics hub. This grouping met daily over several months to ensure that food supply chains remained functional and to coordinate relief items for CARICOM member states.</p> <p>An ADRM Audit was conducted for selected member states. Synthesized reports were prepared and shared with CARICOM to support resource mobilization efforts for the conduct of audits in additional member states.</p>	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla

00153 Rome, Italy