



# BOOSTING AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN BELIZE

Policy reforms in international sugar markets have the potential to negatively impact the profitability of sugarcane production and render many farmers uncompetitive. In Belize, where sugar production is the largest industry and accounts for the livelihoods of many small farmers, sugar producers often have limited capacity to pursue alternative economic activities. Therefore, the Government of Belize promotes mixed farming systems, which provide other income opportunities as an alternative to sugarcane production. The aim of this project was to promote opportunities in onion production and thereby support the development of diversified agricultural production for small farmers in northern Belize by improving efficiency along the onion value chain, strengthening farmers' technical capacities and facilitating access to alternative markets.



## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Using a value chain approach, this project strengthened the capacities of onion farmers in the northern sugar belt districts of Corozal and Orange Walk. A national value chain coordination mechanism was established, and personnel from the Ministry of Agriculture were trained in the value chain development process. Participatory analyses and a review of current onion production practices were carried out to better understand the constraints and opportunities along the onion value chain and identify key actions to promote its development. This resulted in the development of a value chain upgrading strategy and action plan. A range of technical support activities were undertaken, including support to strengthen farmers' groups, farmer field schools (FFS), which helped increase onion productivity 29 percent, and a range of technical workshops, which enhanced knowledge, awareness and linkages among producers and government regulatory and marketing bodies on the application of national quality and grading standards.

## IMPACT

The project activities contributed to reducing poverty and improving living standards of the rural population by strengthening income and employment opportunities through the diversification of production. The key constraining factors that prevented small-scale farmers from maximizing production and earnings from onion cultivation, as well as increasing value chain efficiency in the rural communities of Orange Walk and Corozal, were identified and addressed. As a result, farmers in these regions were able to expand their production, improve their productivity, supply fresh produce to new markets and increase their earnings.

## KEY FACTS

### Contribution

USD 222 646

### Duration

January 2015 – December 2017

### Resource Partner

FAO

### Partner

Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)

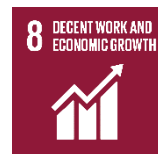
### Beneficiaries

Small-scale sugar cane farming households; Extension service providers; Planning and programme officers of the Ministry of Agriculture



## ACTIVITIES

- Value chain management capacity was developed at the national level by enhancing the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture to apply value chain approaches.
- The onion value chain was strengthened, and approximately 80 onion farming families benefitted from activities.
- An onion value chain approach was piloted for future application in the rest of the country.
- Onion production and post-harvest practices were improved through a series of hands-on training sessions and the application of the FFS approach.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**Project Code**  
TCP/BZE/3502

**Project Title**  
Promoting agribusiness development in northern Belize

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