

Agriculture Policy Programme (APP)

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in Brief



Photo: IICA Dominican Republic

FAO and IICA representatives and their technical teams in the Dominican Republic exchanging experiences on projects in the food industry and promoting the importance of working in a coordinated manner in the areas of common interest.



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not starting from scratch. . .

but building on and complementing past and present efforts

The APP 8.6 million Euro budget cannot and will not solve all, or not even most of the challenges in agriculture in CARIFORUM. There is an explicit recognition of the need to build on existing blocks laid by all public and private sector institutions and non-governmental and civil society organisations and agencies. The APP calls on participating institutions to promote and foster a ‘working together’ approach with the direct beneficiaries and importantly with strategic partners who are linked to implementation agencies and with presence and/or experience in working within countries of the Caribbean.

In addressing stakeholders at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2013, EU Head of Delegation to Guyana, Ambassador Robert Kopecky, confirmed that the APP

will complement the already considerable assistance provided to the region 10th European Development Fund. Some of the EU’s building blocks are the almost 600 million Euro for national Banana and Sugar industries from 2008-2013, the Intra-ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme, which supported product strategies and value chains and new support being provided to the Coconut Sector.

The APP and the recently signed Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Programme with IICA represent a combined value of 20,300,000 Euro, a signal of the EU’s commitment to building on all its past support and partnering for agricultural development in the Caribbean.

Worthy sayings for the APP:

- *APP is a Means to an end - not The End in & of itself!*
- *APP must ‘run’ as a Relay rather than Individual Race – there is no ‘I’ in ‘stakeholder’, ‘country’ or ‘team’!*
- *APP must give more bang for its bucks – it is not a pot of gold!*
- *APP does not need to reinvent the wheel – someone, somewhere has done something similar!*

APP – complementing not competing

The agricultural economy is host to large numbers of small and micro agri-enterprises (SMAEs). This group, particularly small farmers, constitutes the largest group in the agriculture value chain and operates under a number of constraints that challenge their livelihoods and survival in a competitive market environment. There is a number of international development, government affiliated, private sector, non-governmental, civil society and stakeholder organisations, agencies and networks agencies, networks and other service providers already directly involved in supporting SME capacity development using formal and informal mechanisms. APP is expected to complement and build on past and on-going efforts in improving productivity and reinforcing business linkages to raise incomes and enterprise profitability. More business-savvy, cluster-driven and value chain-linked SMEs are indispensable to innovative, vibrant and growing food systems, rural communities and the agriculture economy. The fact that the APP is explicitly focussed on SMEs is additional proof of their importance to sustainable agriculture in CARIFORUM.



CARDI’s Dr. Janet Lawrence collaborating with EU-CFC and IICA in a Group Dynamics Symposium on “Improving the Viability and Competitiveness of Agricultural Industries through Stronger Farmer Groups

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It is hand-on activities like these, for small entrepreneurs, especially women that add value to their quality of life and livelihoods. (IICA-CARDI collaboration)



The regional environment for agriculture is dynamic, involving multi-disciplinary actions by diverse stakeholders operating at different levels. The APP is being strategically inserted into this environment to complement existing initiatives that all share one common pool of target 'beneficiaries'. The implementing agencies all recognise that to add value, the APP cannot and should not attempt to carve out its own agenda, and compete for space with the several other initiatives and institutions already on the ground.

Some fundamental lessons that can be applied to the APP are that:

- **APP is a means to an end; not the end in & of itself:** we know that a homogenous population of stakeholders and partners exist; we also know that many of them are at planning and/or implementing stages for agricultural development activities; we know as well, that

any 'new' initiative would better complement rather than compete for priority, time, support and resources. The APP must be viewed not an isolated programme, but as another one to add to the several inputs into a wider and on-going process for agricultural development.

- **APP must 'run' as a relay rather than an individual race:** – there is no 'I' in 'stakeholder', 'country' or 'team'! Synergies must be fostered and sustained within the APP components, i.e., (C1) Policy Support, (C2) Applied Technology and Transfer & Adoption and (C3) Enterprise Development - so that they reinforce each other, as well as create synergies between the APP and other programmes and potential collaborators, so as to fill gaps and create a platform for continuous development.
- **APP must give more bang for its bucks:** an Euro 8.6 million budget allocated over 15 CARIFORUM countries demands strategic investment of resources, placed at levels and in activities where it matters most, will stimulate positive externalities and will have most direct impact to the intended beneficiaries collectively. The APP cannot, under any stretch of any imagination, be perceived as the proverbial 'pot of gold'! It's budget cannot be reasonably expected to attend to all the numerous needs, or serve all the diverse interests in the agricultural economy. The relay team approach is essential for achieving accuracy and effectiveness of resource use, implementation impact, and also in creating the buy-in that will sustain efforts beyond its duration.
- **APP will not reinvent the wheel:** There is a strong connection and several areas of commonality of interests and needs of beneficiaries, whether as countries or as groups of stakeholders. There is also a high level of similarity of scope and work programmes among agricultural institutions and organisations. Someone, somewhere, has done something similar which can be adopted or adapted as a solution to a shared problem. APP initiatives will find and build on similar past and current efforts working on an understanding that although there could be generic approaches to treating with similar needs, one type of activity does not fit all.

The APP aims to support the efforts of partners in enhancing rural incomes and livelihoods, food security and the development of rural communities. This means that rather than attempting to be the principle actor on interventions being taken in CARIFORUM, the APP will position itself to augment or complement some of the critical needs that would bridge existing limitations and allow the target beneficiaries to make progress on their desired goals. This is especially so for women in agriculture (WiA) and youth in agriculture (YiA).

Regional Cooperation – fundamental to the future of agriculture in the Caribbean

The IICA DG sees regional cooperation and integration initiatives as fundamental pillars of the approach to achieve food and nutrition security and sustained rural development.



Dr. Victor Villalobos, IICA DG

IICA confirmed that the APP is among the very important plans and projects in CARIFORUM which IICA will collaborate with CARICOM, CARDI, CTA, FAO and donor partners, to take forward and implement over the coming months and years. In this context, IICA:

- will strengthen its institutional framework to further consolidate its work to the benefit of partners, clients and stakeholders, such as is being done through the IICA Office in Canada in the area of adding value in the small ruminant livestock sector, a critical source of protein for the Caribbean Region.
- remains firmly committed to partnerships: to work with the CTA, US State Department, and the Pacific region to further consolidate its work towards sharing best practices in accessing niche markets, branding and expanding economic opportunities for rural women entrepreneurs; to work with the FAO on food and nutrition security, including the Zero Hunger Initiative and Schools Healthy Cooking Competition.
- also recognizes that productive solutions for rural economies are not limited to agricultural activities. To this end, IICA will work with partners in Tourism to promote rural agro-tourism linkages through trade, promotion of indigenous cuisine and investments. An example is an agreement signed between IICA's Haiti Office and the Ministry of Tourism to develop four rural tourism routes which will benefit hundreds of poor, rural stakeholders.

The future for agriculture and rural development in the Caribbean looks bright. We must remain committed to working in partnership and creating the synergies to bring the exciting plans and projects into reality.

Agriculture - important for poverty reduction and inclusive growth



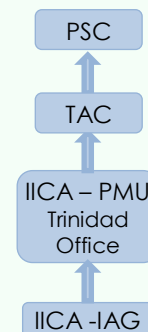
Amb. Robert Kopecky
EU Head of Delegation to Guyana

The EU recognises that Agriculture, including livestock, remains the economic base for the majority of the poor in the world, and constitutes a key economic sector in many developing countries. Agricultural development is closely linked to poverty reduction, food and nutrition security, natural resources management and trade. The EU's Agenda for Change, also includes focus on support for inclusive and sustainable growth in sectors which have a strong multiplier impact on developing countries' economies, such as agriculture, and which at the same time offer strong opportunities in the fields of climate change prevention and adaptation. The agenda for change also promotes gender equality and labour rights, which is not only good for women and youth, but for agricultural development as a whole.

How will the APP be managed?

The APP management structure is in keeping with those of large external programmes.

- The Executing Agency, IICA, has established an Internal Advisory Group (IAG) to manage all pre-implementation matters, including detailing work plans, strengthening partnerships and establishing the PMU.
- A Project Management Unit (PMU) is being established to oversee all the administrative and financial matters, and as well to ensure the technical works are proceeding as planned. A Project Manager, Mr. Robert Best, has been hired and is based in IICA Trinidad and Tobago. The Financial Coordinator and Administrative Assistant will be in place by year end.
- A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will act as the main supervisors of the technical activities. The members of the TAC have already been identified from the Implementing Partners and represent a cross-section of stakeholders and beneficiaries. Informal meetings have been going on in an attempt to clarify, fine-tune and foster integration among planned activities. The TAC approves the annual work plans.
- Project Steering Committee (PSC) will have oversight over the entire APP, and will comprise representatives from the key involved institutions and stakeholder organisations at a higher level of decision-making responsibility, based on, but not limited to recommendations from the TAC. The EU and the CTA will also be represented.



What are the key activities for 2014?

There are very definite themes (T) under which specific activities will be addressed under the three APP Components. These themes all match the priorities established by CARIFORUM countries, both at the level of national and regional policies. In keeping with the simple, yet fundamental principle noted on page 1, the Implementing Partners are undertaking a very thorough process to ensure that the activities are endorsed by the countries and that they identify and develop mechanisms, before implementation, to foster a working together approach.

C1 - Policy Implementation	C2- Applied Technology and Transfer & Adoption	C3: Enterprise - Market Development
T1- Regional Policy Coordination Assess and develop strategies to integrate regional policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms (including for key agri-industries) to enhance implementation.	T1- Farming Systems Sustainability Benchmark-document, validate- demonstrate, introduce-transfer relevant traditional knowledge, innovative practices and technology aids to support sustainable production & that are WiA-YiA appropriate	T1- Value Chain Advancement Document-assess & disseminate-validate findings of past-present VC initiatives and develop VC upgrade and capacity development strategies for selected chains
T2 - Intra-regional Trade Facilitation Identify bottlenecks, develop and promote adoption of strategies to facilitate intra-regional trade in agricultural genetic material & products	T2- Value-Adding Profitability Identify-select, validate-distribute improved crop and animal varieties suited to value-adding to enhance SME processing and product quality.	T2- Agri-Market Info. Systems Functionality Document-assess & disseminate-validate findings on national agricultural production-markets including market information systems and draft plans-capacity building strategies to develop/improve AMIS.
T3 - Agric-Planners Capacity Enhancement Strengthen capacity of agriculture planners for policy analysis, formulation, strategic planning, and developing appropriate policy tools & instruments to improve the situation for SMEs	T3- Varietal-Genetic Stock Improvement Develop capacity to identify-select, collect-acquire, validate-demonstrate, multiply-introduce climate-resilient, disease-free varieties/landraces & germplasm for production under open field and protected agriculture systems.	T3- SME Financing Effectiveness Document-assess & disseminate-validate findings on agriculture financing schemes-mechanisms, especially those for WiA-YiA, use findings to develop improved SME financing schemes, and develop promotion and capacity building strategies to support adoption of improved financing mechanisms by financing service providers
T4- Agri-Info Systems Functionality Strengthen national capacity to generate and manage agricultural information for decision making, planning and reporting.		

How will the APP be grounded in Countries?

"I wanted to ensure that I say that because a lot of times we have these regional projects that get lost and at the national level people don't know of them or ever see the benefits. People are hearing about sums of money going towards regional development and they know that there are organisations and institutions that are receiving sums of money and they are questioning this. They ask: 'What are we getting out of this? Are these resources going into administrative expenses and travelling because we are seeing nothing at the level of the country'. These are sentiments that are being expressed and we would be foolhardy if we think we can just ignore them. Our people are becoming impatient and they want to see results that are grounded in their countries. They don't want to hear about things hidden in a regional programme and they can't relate to it because they can see no tangible results at a national level. They want to know that the money being put into these projects have helped Caribbean countries respond to their needs."

Minister Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Agriculture Guyana
at an IICA Briefing of EU programmes, Caribbean Week of Agriculture, Guyana

Partners, Be Warned! Minister Ramsammy captures the high expectations of target beneficiaries and stakeholders of the APP. It is in this regard, the core strategy is the introduction of the National Agriculture Policy Programme (NAPP) as THE key implementation mechanism for engagement, relevance, participation and accountability, designed to respond to the Minister's concerns.

NAAP is taking a bottom-up approach to the regional APP.

Within the budget and scope of the APP, NAPPs will be THE instrument to:

- ensure that activities under the APP are relevant to, and complement the priorities of the country,
- define specifically what activities will be undertaken within countries level,
- keep track, monitor results and determine the contributions or added value of having the APP.

The NAPPs will take the form of an understanding, signed by the three Implementing Partners and the Minister of Agriculture, as the official representative of the government and national stakeholders. To arrive to this stage, IICA has:

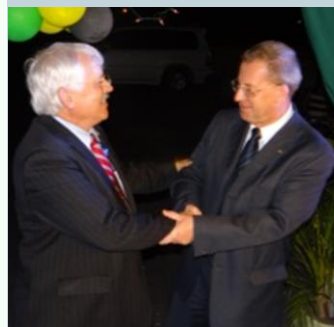
- briefed**, jointly with CARDI and CARICOM Secretariat, their country offices on the APP, by groups, to enhance knowledge of the APP so as to better prepare personnel to engage stakeholders.
- drafted** 15 indicative NAPPs, based on the activities defined in the Technical Components, to serve as the basis for country engagement, dialogue and consensus on direct APP country interventions;
- consulted** IICA-CARDI country offices, on the indicative NAPP to clarify its purpose, the importance of facilitating active involvement of private and public stakeholders throughout the process and strategies to enhance effectiveness of stakeholder engagement. This national-led process is expected to lead to more accurate information on:
 - **building blocks**: what key complementary or similar actions, programs, projects, etc., have happened, are ongoing or being that could fall within the scope of the APP. This is critical to identify possible duplication, gaps and areas to foster the working together approach;
 - **strategic collaborators**: who is engaged in food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development in country and the possibilities for partnerships to leverage the impact of the APP;
 - **platforms for coordination**: what implementing type of institutional and/or stakeholder coordinating mechanisms already exist on the ground which could be enhanced to action the NAPP and its successful implementation;
 - **viable options for sustainability**: given their familiarity and knowledge in-country, what strategies could be built into activity design and implementation to maintain partnerships, leverage synergies and enhance sustainability.



Minister Leslie Ramsammy at the Briefing of the IICA-EU Regional Programmes, CWA Guyana

Issue #4 – December 2013 will feature:

- the signing of the partnerships agreements between IICA and CARDI and IICA and CARICOM Secretariat,
- as well as details on the 2014 Work Plan.



IICA DG and EU HoD-Guyana share a moment reflecting on the benefits of cooperation



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Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
#10 Austin Street, St. Augustine, Trinidad
Contact: Gregg C.E. Rawlins
Tel: (868) 645 4555 ~ Gregg.Rawlins@iica.int

Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)
UWI St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad
Contact: H. Arlington D. Chesney
Tel: (868) 645 1205 ~ executive@cardi.org

CARICOM Secretariat
DPM - Agricultural Development
CARICOM Secretariat
Greater Georgetown, Guyana
Tel: (011) 592 222 0001/20