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## COLEACP SPS Actions

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The Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP) is a civil society organisation established in 1973 by stakeholders in the international fruit and vegetable trade. It is a not-for-profit association that supports the development of sustainable and competitive agriculture and agribusiness. Its main objective is to facilitate the flow of trade within the ACP region, and between ACP countries and the EU.

Since 2001 COLEACP has been entrusted by the European Commission (EC) to implement five EDF-funded programmes where support for SPS compliance was the central element. These include PIP (2001-2015), EDES (2010-2015), and Fit for Market (2016-2020). It is also a partner in several regional research and development programmes such as PAEPARD and the West African Regional Fruit Fly Programme.

Over the past 15 years COLEACP has delivered technical assistance in over 50 ACP countries. It has developed and trained a network of some 1000 local ACP (mainly SPS) experts, and has an established and proven system for training, technical support, and institutional strengthening for both public and private sectors. In addition to core programme activities, COLEACP is regularly approached by both public and private ACP and EU stakeholders for assistance to address food safety and plant health crises in ACP countries, in particular where SPS non-compliances have resulted in special measures and the risk of disrupted trade.

In summary, core programme activities have included:

1. Support for ACP producers and exporters to meet SPS regulations and standards through a comprehensive programme of technical assistance. SMEs and smallholder farmers have received support to establish and implement internal food safety management systems, among others.
2. Support for ACP competent authorities in the establishment and implementation of national food safety and plant health systems, with particular emphasis on: risk assessment, management, and communication; inspection services; pesticide registration; national monitoring systems; analytical services; and regional harmonisation.
3. Innovation brokerage to ensure that the EU pesticide MRL Harmonisation Programme and the Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 review process do not leave ACP producers without essential Plant Protection Products. This included defending or extrapolating existing EU MRLs, and establishing EU Import Tolerances, with some parallel work to obtain CODEX MRLs for local and regional trade.

### PIP Programmes (Phases 1 and 2)

PIP was conceived and developed by COLEACP in the late 1990s in response to concerns from its members about changes to EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Regulations, in particular the harmonisation of pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs). They feared that these changes would create barriers for ACP exports and affect their access to EU markets.

The first phase of PIP was designed to provide producers and exporters with the necessary information, training and support so that they could meet the new EU food safety regulations and private industry standards. The core activity was capacity building of private sector operators, especially smallholders, to establish and implement food safety management systems. Alongside this, through innovation and brokerage, PIP provided technical solutions to ACP suppliers so that they had the tools and advice to comply with the evolving regulations and standards.

PIP Phase 2 built on the activities and achievements of the first phase. The global objective was to “maintain and if possible increase the contribution made by export horticulture to the reduction of poverty in ACP countries”. The specific objective was to achieve this through “conformity of ACP horticultural produce with EU regulations and market requirements”.

The model developed by COLEACP under the PIP programmes provided targeted assistance to the private sector, while strengthening the capacity of the enabling environment (public and private) to support the sector over the long-term.

## **EDES**

While PIP focused on the private sector, EDES support was primarily directed to public sector competent authorities. EDES also worked with commodities and sectors additional to the traditional COLEACP scope of fruit and vegetables including cacao, fish, honey, beef, and poultry.

The objective of the EDES Programme was to "support the development in the ACP of risk-based food safety systems for exports in line with European, international and regional standards". The main priority was to ensure that food safety systems in target countries complied with the requirements applicable to maintain and facilitate regional and European trade. The expected results addressed official controls including: "food inspection services so that they operate efficiently, independently and transparently along control procedures that are harmonized with international standards and EU legislation". When available, EDES activities addressed the recommendations made by inspections/analyses of national competent authorities by recognised bodies such as OIE (PVS - Gap Analysis tool), FVO inspection missions, and STDF reports.

## **Fit for Markets**

In 2016 COLEACP launched the new 5-year “Fit for Markets” Programme. This forms part of the intra-ACP indicative program (2014-2020) for cooperation between the European Union and the ACP Group of States. The current total budget is € 25 million, including € 20 million from the EDF. The specific objective is to enable smallholders, farmer groups and organisations, and MSMEs to access international and domestic horticultural markets by complying with SPS issues and market requirements, in a sustainable framework.

The programme is in line with the sustainable development goals and focuses on increasing production while minimising negative impacts on the climate, ecosystems and the productive environment. There is particular emphasis on smallholder participation, young people, and women, who are frequently the most disadvantaged by the changes taking place in local and global supply chains, and who often have most to gain from improved conditions of production, employment and trade.

Fit for Markets facilitates growth while increasing the resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability of ACP horticultural value chains. The programme also focuses on the transfer of advances made in the export sector in terms of production, food safety, plant health, and sustainability, to also benefit local and regional markets and consumers. Programme support targets: value chain operators (MSMEs, brokers, small-scale growers, transporters, farmer groups and cooperatives); and support services (e.g. consultants, farmer organizations, trade associations, training centres, certification bodies, smallholder support projects, and National Technical Working Groups. There is a specific area of support for competent authorities (in particular inspection services) to enhance their capacity to manage and enforce SPS standards.

“Fit for Markets” builds on 14 years of experience and success with the COLEACP model, working with private and public sectors in the delivery of technical assistance.