

COLEACP

COLEACP - The Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee - is a civil society organisation established in 1973 by stakeholders in the international fresh produce trade. Its members include EU importers; and producers, exporters and service providers from Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries. The COLEACP mission is to “Develop the agrifood trade in an inclusive and sustainable way, with a particular focus on fruit and vegetables from ACP countries supplying local, regional and international (EU) markets”.

COLEACP core activities include technical assistance, training, market intelligence, information and communication, business development, research and innovation, and advocacy. Support to both public and private sectors is delivered through programmes, the bulk of which to date have been funded by the EU. Between 2001-2015, COLEACP support focused on food safety and plant health, but now increasingly extends also into sustainable production and trade.

Fit for Market Programme (FFM)

FFM is the largest programme currently implemented by COLEACP. It was launched in 2016 and is joint funded by the EU and AfD to the tune of €20 million and €5 million respectively. The specific objective is to enable ACP operators (smallholders, farmer groups, farmer associations, and MSMEs) to access international and domestic horticultural markets by complying with SPS and market requirements, in a sustainable framework. SPS technical assistance is delivered through three main work streams, with the addition of further SPS-related work currently under discussion.

Capacity Building of ACP Operators

FFM provides technical assistance to ACP operators giving them the knowledge and skills they need to comply with regulations and standards, use good practice, and supply fresh and processed horticultural produce on a competitive and sustainable basis. Assistance is delivered using the COLEACP cascade "Training of Trainers" approach, accompanied by coaching and tailored support in the areas of food safety, plant health, and sustainability (social and environmental modules). FFM beneficiaries have access to extensive training materials and technical publications. These include crop protocols and guides that cover 90% of EU-ACP horticultural export flows, and keep stakeholders up-to-date with SPS regulations and standards. In-country support is delivered via the COLEACP network of over 1000 ACP service providers. Where the capacity is weak, COLEACP also develops local public and private support services in key areas, including food safety and plant health.

By June 2018, the FFM Programme had received and processed 444 requests for support from individual operators, covering 45 ACP countries. Of these, 214 support projects are already underway, and 192 capacity building events (technical assistance, on-site training, collective training) have been delivered. These operators employ 83 894 people (46 859 of whom are women), and have a combined turnover of €173 954 580. The total number of small producers supported to date is estimated at 1,627,429, reached via these operators as well as public and NGO extension services.

Conditions for market access and competitiveness

COLEACP monitors regulations, enforcement mechanisms, and compliance to identify potential or emerging SPS problems affecting ACP exports. Appropriate action is taken to inform, prepare, and react when a problem is identified. This includes:

- Update stakeholders on changes to SPS regulations and standards (e.g. plant protection product approvals; MRLs; plant health rules) via news bulletins and online databases. Advise on any corresponding changes that need to be made, for example to Good Agricultural Practices, to ensure continued compliance
- Give feedback to ACP stakeholders on RASFF and EUROPHYT notifications; provide advice and support to tackle any emerging SPS problems at an early stage

- Lobby to defend ACP interests in evolving food safety, plant health, and organic regulations
- Advocate with scheme owners to ensure that private voluntary standards are appropriate and do not put ACP suppliers at a disadvantage

Capacity building of ACP competent authorities

FFM strengthens the role of ACP competent authorities in the development and enforcement of food safety and plant health-related regulations in horticultural value chains. The focus is on: (i) improving the capacity and effectiveness of ACP inspection services in the implementation of official controls under EU regulations and international standards; (ii) facilitating the establishment of national public-private stakeholder platforms that can address SPS and food safety issues; and (iii) advocating for any necessary reforms to national (ACP) regulatory and governance frameworks. Activities build on the framework and training modules developed under the EDES programme, but extended to strengthen governance, address plant health, improve national capacities for SPS troubleshooting, and ensure safe food for local and regional consumers.

Support focuses on priority problems and export sectors. To date this has included: the development of national SPS committees and action plans in West Africa to tackle the problem of mango fruit fly; raising awareness of and preparedness for the new EU Plant Health regulation (including 14 national workshops); supporting actions to meet emergency EU plant health measures (e.g. Fall Armyworm, False Coddling Moth); regional training of NPPOs in Pest Risk Assessment and Pest Free Zones.

PRODEFIMA

PRODEFIMA ran from 2014-17 to develop the mango sector in Guinea. It was funded by ITC-WTO to the tune of USD 3 million, The Guinean Agency for Export Promotion (Aguipex) led the programme, with COLEACP partnering to lead on capacity building. Activities included a trade mission to Europe; networking through the Mango Regional Alliance; development of training materials for quality managers in private and public sectors on “Harvest and Post-Harvest”; development of a “Food Safety and Quality Management Systems Handbook”.

REGIONAL FRUIT FLY PROGRAMME

COLEACP is a partner in the EU-AFD funded (€23.5million, 2015-2019) programme covering ECOWAS countries. COLEACP provides technical support to the coordination Committee; leads the establishment of a training system; and coordinates the implementation of control and monitoring activities at national level.

PILELINE

- Partnership with the “Groupement Indication Géographique Poivre de Penja” for a project to improve food safety and plant health in the production of Penja pepper in Cameroon.
- Strategy for strengthening Togo's SPS system (STDF/PG/375). Contract ready for signature. Implementation to start in Nov18