



Ensuring food safety capacity of the pepper value chain in Jamaica to access strategic export markets

The overall goal of the project is to increase the competitiveness, safety, and sustainability of Jamaica's hot pepper industry by ensuring a consistent supply of high quality, pest-free peppers. The proposed project aims to improve compliance of food safety and plant health requirements along the hot pepper value chain to increase production and export to markets such as the EU, UK, USA, Canada and other countries in the region.

The project intends to achieve the overall goal by: (i) improving the technical and resource capacity of local research and regulatory bodies involved in SPS management; (ii) providing greater access to clean planting material to reduce the prevalence of pests and diseases and increase yields; (iii) increasing the capacity of stakeholders to adopt risk-based food safety systems; (iv) promoting sustainable agricultural practices; and (v) increasing export potential through market studies and bilateral agreements.

It is expected that the successful execution of this project would provide the foundation for replication in other commodities in Jamaica and in other CARICOM member states.

STDF/PG/759

Status

On-going

Start Date

01/05/2022

End Date

30/04/2025

Project Value (US\$)

\$2,114,566

STDF Contribution (US\$)

\$995,693

Beneficiaries

Jamaica

Implementing Entities

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Background

Over 3,600 farmers from the parishes of St Elizabeth, St Mary and St Ann who depend on farming as their major, if not only, source of income will be the primary beneficiaries of this project. These farmers will adopt and comply with internationally

accepted plant health and food safety standards, and implement new production techniques, with a view towards expanding their access to foreign markets. Other beneficiaries will include nursery operators, agro-park operators, processing facilities, export-oriented MSMEs, research institutions and laboratories, extension officers, and consumers.

The overall goal targets for this project are to reduce pest-related interceptions by 25%, increase production and distribution of clean seeds or planting materials by 20%, and increase pepper production by 10% over the course of 3 years.

This is a very ambitious project dealing with a diverse array of SPS issues involving many different stakeholder groups. The project intends to improve practices of regulatory bodies, laboratories, nurseries, farms, and processing facilities. It includes activities such as developing a comprehensive pest surveillance system, establishing inspection and monitoring mechanisms for nurseries, farms and produce handling facilities, and even exploring the establishment of pest free areas. Even though the project is very ambitious, there appears to be strong national ownership and a solid commitment on behalf of the project partners to meet the various targets that have been set.

This type of value chain approach could be replicated in neighbouring CARICOM countries and also in other strategic value chains in Jamaica. This would be the first STDF project dealing specifically with the hot pepper value chain and would also be the first STDF project to be funded in Jamaica.

Expected Results

Output 1: Improve the technical and resource capacity of local research and regulatory bodies involved in SPS management with a focus on reducing the prevalence of pests and on distribution of clean seeds to enable greater availability of clean planting material

Due to the limitations at current research and certification facilities, there is a limited supply of certified clean planting materials and seeds. The output aims to strengthen the capacity of private nurseries to produce and store breeder/foundation seeds for pepper varieties and the desired traits. It aims to build the technical, research, and testing capacity for personnel involved in SPS management. This will help support the establishment of the appropriate legal framework to regulate and monitor the viability of seeds and seed quality used as starting material.

Output 2: Increase the capacity of stakeholders to produce safe foods that satisfy local and international market access requirements

Hot pepper farmers are currently unable to meet the demand for hot peppers due to low market standard supply. This output will aim to select value chain actors (farmers, middlemen, exporters), conduct farm needs assessment for food safety management, develop a food safety capacity-building program, and collaborate with Ministries and departments for training and education programs on good agricultural practices and food safety.

This output will seek to assess the reasons for the refusal of hot pepper productions (fresh and processed) into international markets. The project will provide corrective measures, through a market access assessment and the development of a communication-marketing mechanism. Equal participation of men and women will be encouraged, with a minimum target of at least 30% of participants being women.

Output 3: Promote the value chain and food safety systems approach by strengthening sustainable and resilient practices to increase the output of fresh pepper production, storage, and transformation

This output aims to strengthen the technical capacity of agencies on sustainable, climate resilient and adapted good agricultural and transformation practices with an aim to improve yields and standards compliance. Equal participation of men and women will be encouraged, with a minimum target of at least 30% of participants being women.