Coordinating management of cadmium levels in cocoa in Latin America and the Caribbean

This project application is the result of an STDF-funded PPG implemented by the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) from Mar-17 to Dec-18. The PPG carried out a detailed assessment of research and scientific studies conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean, to understand the level of knowledge and stage of development of practices to mitigate/remediate cadmium (Cd) contamination in cocoa beans and cocoa products. The PPG also developed a regional strategy framework identifying the outstanding gaps and recommendations, based on consultation with a wide range of public and private stakeholders.

The current project proposal has been designed as part of this regional approach and aims to support the management of cadmium concentration in cocoa and cocoa-derived products in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Trinidad & Tobago, to mitigate trade measures imposed by the EU and other markets.

STDF/PG/577

Status
On-going

Start Date
01/02/2022

Project Value (US$)
$550,948

STDF Contribution (US$)
$381,946

Beneficiaries
Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago

Implementing Entities
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Background

The project has been designed as part of a regional approach to dealing with the issue of Cd contamination in cocoa and cocoa products produced in the LAC region. It will facilitate regional efforts to address the issue of Cd contamination in order to maintain market access for producers (mainly small-scale farmers), whilst safeguarding the safety of consumers. Current best practices will be identified and disseminated among the beneficiary countries and within the region.

The project intends to provide a platform on which agencies involved will be able to implement a regional strategy to mitigate/remediate cadmium contamination and work towards maintaining market access for cocoa and cocoa products. In the short term, the project will bring relevant stakeholders together to share knowledge, methods and approaches, and co-
developed research strategies for the benefit of producers and traders. This approach could be replicable for other SPS issues of concern (including other heavy metals, alternative crops and commodities), and for other countries in the LAC region and beyond.

The beneficiary countries were selected based on their development status and leadership in the area of Cd research and mitigation practices. Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are upper middle-income countries and their current and potential capacity for researching and managing heavy metal-related problems in cocoa is recognized. Trinidad & Tobago, although graduated from the DAC list of ODA recipients and not eligible for the STDF, is considered valuable to the project due to its research capacity. It is also perceived as a location where focused research can be carried out as pilot interventions which could then be transferred to the other countries and the wider region. The Cocoa Research Centre at the University of the West Indies houses a germplasm collection from which material can be transferred to other countries. It is indicated that funding would be sought from other funding sources to ensure the involvement of Trinidad & Tobago.

A gender and environmental analysis was conducted during the PPG phase. Some of the recommendations that emerged have been included in this project proposal. These include:

- Women should be specifically targeted in any consultations, surveys and communications work, particularly in Colombia and Ecuador;
- Target messages to women through gender-sensitive means;
- Encourage participation of women in all project activities;
- Encouraging young growers to grow cocoa in a cadmium-aware manner through mobile messaging;
- The effects on the environment of adding inputs such as lime to the soil would have to be closely monitored;
- Alternative uses for the soils presenting high levels of Cd should be considered; and
- Use of technological tools for information dissemination, taking into consideration the impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on technical assistance and training activities