Strengthening the phytosanitary and food safety system in key value chains

To contribute to higher exports of chilli peppers, aubergines and tomatoes in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, thereby helping Dominican Haitian families to increase their incomes and reduce the level of poverty of their families.

This will be done by working on the development of a system focused on food safety and quality for the tomato, aubergine and chilli pepper value chains, which will promote higher exports of these products to international and domestic markets.

STDF/PG/751

Status
On-going

Start Date
01/07/2022

End Date
30/06/2025

Project Value (US$)
$692,980

STDF Contribution (US$)
$554,180

Beneficiaries
Haiti
Dominican Republic

Implementing Entities
Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana (JAD)

Background

World trade in fresh produce has been expanding significantly in recent years due to the growing world population, and to changes in consumer tastes and preferences, as they are demanding increasingly healthy food. At the same time, import markets are imposing more requirements.

For both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the most important export markets are the United States of America and Europe. Demand for imported food and beverages in the United States is valued at more than USD 140 billion. Meanwhile, demand in Europe tops USD 467 billion annually.

In this context, over the past five years, both markets have been modifying their food safety and quality requirements in
accordance with the demands and stipulations of their consumers, thereby increasing market access requirements. In particular, for fresh agricultural products with sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical requirements related to quality, packaging and labelling, and certifications to ensure good practices that affect workers, the product and production methods.

The provisions of a number of European regulations are being amended so that producers on the island of Hispaniola can access those markets. These amendments have been primarily in relation to good agricultural practices, manufacturing, labelling, pesticides’ maximum residue limits, and pests and diseases that have a trade impact, and have redefined the production process of many productive chains.

Across the island, agriculture has a highly significant and decisive socio economic impact, as it has an income multiplier effect for producers, dependants and the regional economy; there is evidence of economic and social development where this activity has increased markedly.

In the Dominican Republic, the agricultural sector accounts for one in every six jobs in the country. It contributes 6% to GDP and has created over 270,000 direct jobs. In Haiti, the data are even more noteworthy: agriculture creates more than one in three jobs. Agricultural activity accounts for 22% of GDP and creates some 1.7 million jobs.

The trade value of the three production chains selected is important for the island, both in terms of local consumption and in terms of the Dominican Republic’s current exports and Haiti’s export potential. These chains were chosen primarily because of the pests inherent to the products, which have led to them being repeatedly rejected for sale by the European and United States’ markets. According to USDA/APHIS reports, nearly 12% of fruit and vegetables are intercepted and subject to quarantine measures, which range from fumigation to the destruction of the product or its return to the market of origin. This results in major losses, particularly for MSMEs on the island.

**Expected Results**

**To improve the legal and institutional framework of the health system**

By reviewing current phytosanitary and food safety laws and decrees, both countries will work to best adapt their legislation in relation to these crops in order to promote their clear, secure and safe production for local and international markets.

Both countries will also seek to strengthen the technical committees already working in the areas of health and food safety, and, in Haiti, new steering committees and task forces will be established.

In addition, the links between the two countries and between public and private institutions will be strengthened to create health and food safety control, surveillance and monitoring mechanisms for chilli peppers, aubergines and tomatoes, which may serve as a point of reference for other products.

**To build the technical capacities of officials and to promote exports**

A specialized training and technical assistance programme will build the capacities of technical advisers and producers from both the public and private sectors in both countries.

Similarly, pilot programmes will be carried out to improve the management of these crops and to carry out surveillance inspections for actual and potential pests.

Lastly, work will be undertaken to support market related capacities and connections, and consideration will be given to producers’ participation in fairs and events that could put them in touch with international buyers.