

## Caribbean Region: Development of value added products and intra-regional trade to enhance livelihoods from coconuts



### PROJECT SUMMARY

Despite the growing global demand for fresh coconut produce in global food & beverage and health & beauty markets, many Caribbean countries continue to face constraints which limit their ability to compete and benefit from this growing market demand. Moreover, many farming communities across the region face a variety of production problem such as pests and disease, aging coconut trees and limited market access which impacts negatively upon their ability to derive a sustainable income from coconuts.

To address these issues the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) have partnered together for a European Union funded project to improve income and employment opportunities, food security, and overall competitiveness of the Caribbean coconut sector. The *Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean* is a project financed under the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund and will be implemented in the CARIFORUM countries of Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Launched in 2015, this four year project has the goal of enhancing farming productivity, business capacity and the competitiveness of small scale farmers and enterprises along the coconut value chain. To do this, the project will undertake interventions to address four key areas that currently prevent the sector from achieving its full potential:

- 1. Regional cooperation:** Increased regional market integration through promotion of greater coordination and cooperation of those involved in the coconut value chain;
- 2. Productivity & sustainability:** Enhanced productivity, volume and sustainability of coconut production through producer training in production methods to improve soil fertility, pest and disease control for example as well as dissemination of research and development and potential technological innovations for the industry;
- 3. Market information:** Improved small producer access to market information and advisory services on finance, trade, and management and generation of new business opportunities particularly in value added activities; and,
- 4. Risk management:** Improved smallholder capacity for risk planning particularly for climate and market risks and increased access to risk management tools.

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## PROJECT APPROACH

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This project will use a participatory approach to foster coordination and collaboration between key national and regional stakeholders in the coconut value chain. Facilitated by CARDI and ITC, regular workshops will be run to bring together farmers, buyers, entrepreneurs, processors and industry representatives within the sector. Together, stakeholders will identify the market constraints that limit business transactions and reduce income opportunities, share knowledge and market information, and devise innovative interventions at different stages of the value chain to enhance sector-wide competitiveness.

<b>PROJECT:</b>	Coconut Industry Development for the Caribbean
<b>COVERAGE:</b>	Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Surinam, Trinidad & Tobago
<b>DEVELOPMENT GOALS:</b>	Increase food availability and reinforce incomes of small scale farmers
<b>TIME-FRAME:</b>	2015 - 2018
<b>BUDGET:</b>	€ 3, 500, 000

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## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project activities will be implemented by national and regional institutions. Project activities will focus on:

- Collaboration between partners to design sector roadmaps and selection of the most favourable business opportunities and potential upgrading trajectories to support industry growth, regional value chain development and economic opportunities for local firms and rural producers;
- Assisting farmers to select and combine coconut production alongside other crops or livestock to diversify their sources of income and improve food security;
- Increasing access to support services including farming and processing techniques, food safety and quality requirements and link producers to regional and global buyers;
- Advancing research & development activities including for farmer characterizations and farming intensification methods;
- Generating new business opportunities for processing coconuts, especially coconut oil and coconut water which can create additional value for producers and entrepreneurs allowing them to operate in different or interconnected value chains and in different markets simultaneously (domestic, regional, international); and,
- Building multi-stakeholder policy networks which link local and foreign enterprises, smallholder farmers, banks, and traders to public support institutions for capacity building, knowledge sharing and Private-Public dialogue. This will result in more effective policies targeting the value chain actors.

The project is expected to benefit small farmers and enterprises across the region.

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## PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2015
- **February:** Technical collaboration has been initiated between Caribbean stakeholders, CARDI, Indian coconut research & development and technology institutes and members of Asia Pacific Coconut Community (APCC). This collaboration will support activities to improve coconut harvesting techniques and technology, supply plant material, disaster risk management strategies and opportunities for processing technology.
  - **March:** CARDI and ITC officially kicked off the project in Trinidad & Tobago.
  - **April – May:** Value Chain Development Road Mapping Workshops will be undertaken for all nine countries. Workshops will involve local partners and specialists from within and outside the region to discuss current market dynamics, performance requirements, plant material availability, new technologies as a base to formulate national Caribbean Coconut Development Road Map for market-led development of the coconut and coconut products sector.



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