



ALL ACP AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES PROGRAMME

Newsletter N° 5

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EDITORIAL

The results can be seen

Resuming work, after the summer break, is, by tradition, the time for a fresh start. One year ago, in our newsletter dated August 2008, we released results of the regional kick off workshops which allowed us through a participatory approach to take cognizance of the priority needs of the ACP countries. These have since then been translated into activities to be achieved under the programme.

Today, we are in a position to present the first concrete results of the activities launched by the five partner international organisations of the programme. All of them address the same common objective of poverty alleviation in rural areas through the reinforcement of the agricultural commodity value chains of ACP countries. Hence, the programme now covers a very wide scope of actions.

The synergies that have grown amongst the international organisations are bearing fruit, thus showing how they complement each other. Support to the design and implementation of participatory strategies has resulted into many actions which facilitate market access (training, information, diversification, quality) and enhancement of producer prices (insurance and commodity exchange).

The Coordination Unit, for its part, pledges to press on with its mission of ensuring the best possible coordination of the programme.

The Coordination Unit

End of the programming stage of tranche II

Following the recommendations made by the evaluation team and consultations with ACP partners (see previous newsletter), initiatives to be funded under tranche II are being defined.

The recommendations of the evaluation have encouraged the five partner international organisations to jointly implement regional activities covering not only cotton but also a select number of commodities in order for the programme to have a real impact in terms of objectives set. Thus, actions following on Tranche 1 and corresponding to strategy implementation would be favored.

During the MTR workshop which brought together ACP stakeholders, priority sectors at regional level had been identified. Thus, fruit and vegetables came top for the Pacific Region, the Caribbean opted to focus the support delivered by the programme on food value chains, the Central African Region chose the coffee and food (cassava and plantain) value chains, West Africa identified rice and maize as well as roots and tubers as priority segments and Eastern and Southern Africa targeted cassava, coffee and fruit and vegetables.

These activities will be strengthened by cross-cutting actions so as to benefit the whole of the country and products. □



UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

Coffee: In Cameroon, the ITC, World Bank, and UNCTAD support the gourmet coffee value chain at the level of the funding, promotion and establishment of an exchange. World Bank is active in Haiti on the improvement of farming methods and post-harvest storage, in the Dominican Republic on a gourmet coffee strategy and in Papua New Guinea on a development strategy for the value chain.



Six strategies completed: The ITC which mainly intervenes to assist in strategy elaboration had completed six strategies at mid 2009: coffee in Cameroon, cotton in Eastern and Southern Africa, nutmeg and mace in Grenada, fruit and vegetables in Jamaica, food crops in Fiji and fruit and vegetables in Samoa.

Good Agricultural Practices: FAO furthers in West Africa the promotion of good agricultural practices, of sustainable agriculture/integrated farming and integrated pest management (IPPM). The training sessions delivered by 100 trainers in Mali and 40 in Benin have already benefited 5 700 and 4 100 cotton producers respectively. The ongoing activity should impact on twice or thrice more producers than initially planned.

Access to markets A major intervention focus

Connect the producers with markets, strengthen value chains and operate at a regional level are some of the objectives of the AAACP programme which constitute the basis of numerous activities.

Many agricultural producers in ACP countries derive insufficient income from their production because limited market access. Generally, the marketing of agricultural produce depends on a large variety of factors that the producer needs to master.

A comprehensive range of support is proposed. The Commodity Risk Management Group, of the World Bank elaborates insurance products linked to risks impacting the producer (weather, price, finance...). The activities are specially significant in the Caribbean and Pacific regions due to their vulnerability to cyclones as well as in the Sahel where drought prevails.

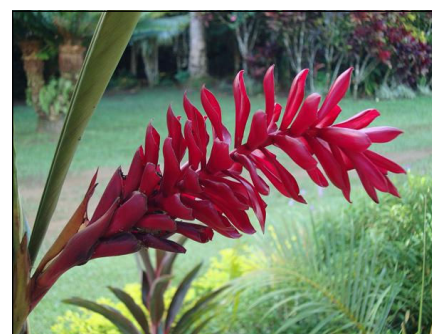
UNCTAD focuses on warehouse receipts systems, market information, regional commodity exchanges (projects in the Caribbean, Cameroon and Ghana...), and regional market operations.

FAO's interventions relate to production factors and agricultural practices with a view to aligning the product with market needs. It offers training on good agricultural practices which enable compliance with international quality standards and health regulations. It identifies and promotes niche markets which could be accessed by upscale goods such as organic cotton or off-season fruit and vegetables.

The sustainable development network of the World Bank (WB-SDN) is also involved in the identification and promotion of niche market products (gourmet coffee in the Caribbean and Cameroon..) and in the expansion of regional trade (fruit and vegetables in West Africa). Its action helps to better take advantage of the opportunities of import substitution existing at regional level, therefore contributing to address the present food crisis..

The International Trade Centre (ITC) focuses its actions on the formulation of sectoral strategies and their implementation, in collaboration with other IOs.

The actions of the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) focus on two main activities: cotton grading and warehouse receipt systems in Eastern Africa. □



Innovating synergies through the sharing of expertise

On-the-field implementation of the activities of the AAACP programme is an opportunity for very rewarding multiple and crossed collaboration as testified by all IOs.

“Collaboration with other IOs of the AAACP has been globally successful, yet dependent on IOs as well as on regional and country situations: clear complementarities have been identified with the ITC for market and product development ..., with CFC on commodity sub-sector programs ..., and with the FAO on food crops marketing ...”, this comment written in the mid-year report of the World Bank on the AAACP Programme reflects the common feeling of the five partner IOs who from now on are working hand in hand in view of an optimal and efficient implementation of the activities.

Examples are many: among them we can list not only the collaboration between ITC and FAO on the revival of coffee (also with the WB), plantain and cassava in Cameroon and cassava in Guyana, but also the initiatives related to commodity exchanges in Western and Eastern Africa which are being jointly examined by the WB, the FAO, UNCTAD and the CFC.

Collaboration is being established with political and farmers' organisations of ACP countries such as WAEMU, ECOWAS, CEMAC, COMESA, SADC, ROPPA, PROPAC, EAFF, SACAU in Africa, SPC and MFFN in the Pacific, CAFAN and CARDI in the Caribbean. Beyond their actual involvement in the identification and implementation of the actions, they are called upon to play a major linking role between Brussels and the beneficiaries of the programme.

Several NGOs are directly engaged in the achievement of activities through the commissioning of experts. Among these, « Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans frontières » (AVSF) is working closely with the national coffee Institute in Haiti on the development of the value chain, OXFAM is involved in a pilot project for product marketing in Jamaica, Farm Concern assists in the reinforcement of producer organisations in Kenya. Scientific research institutes of the North and the South are also engaged. Among these, CARDI in the Caribbean, CORAF in Western and Central Africa, INERA in Burkina Faso and CIRAD ...

These collaborations enable an original pooling of knowledge and expertise. All these forms of synergies and networking are one of the unique features of the AAACP programme. □



UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

Insurance: expanded knowledge transfer: The « Commodity Risk Management Group » (CRMG) of the World Bank has elaborated a large scale training strategy geared for ACP countries. The CRMG will identify countries where the sessions will be delivered and the local and regional partners who will be in charge. The latter will be coached by the CRMG staff.

Market Intelligence: UNCTAD is implementing three major information channels: INFOCOMM, INFOSHARE and the Sustainability Claims Portal.

INFOCOMM (www.unctad.org/onfocomm/francais/indexfr.htm) is a web portal devoted to the major agricultural commodities of tropical regions. It has been arranged by commodity with information on the crop, its cultivation, uses, market, value chains, technology, price and economic policies for each of them.

INFOSHARE (<http://infoshare.unctad.org>) is an activity based in Central Africa which offers real time access to the main market indicators for coffee and cocoa (price, costs, interest rates, standards, exporters' listings, warehouses...). The system is operational since last June. Discussions with the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC) with a view to establishing the system in the Pacific region are ongoing.

The Sustainability Claims Portal (SCP) (www.unctad.org/scp) is a portal covering issues related to norms, standards and labels pertaining to sustainable development especially organic agriculture, fair trade, indication of origin. It is being developed to inform ACP producers and EU consumers about these various labels and norms.

A strategy for cotton in COMESA

The cotton strategy for Eastern and Southern Africa has been formally launched on the 4th of June during a meeting of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The COMESA strategy for cotton aims at improving the performance, competitiveness and effectiveness of the value chain by redefining the role of the State, reinforcing the positions of the private sector and producer organisations, enabling access to inputs, finance and markets, and by disseminating innovation. It targets the whole of the value chain, from cotton growing to the textile industry. Its end objective is, according to the recommendations of the COMESA « to make available an integrated and competitive cotton-to-cloth value chain ».

Its development had been commissioned in 2006 in Djibouti by the Heads of State of the COMESA. As early as 2006, the ITC assisted COMESA and the African Cotton Textiles Industry Federation (ACTIF) in the strategy design and formulation. The AAACP Programme supported the work surrounding the strategy's finalisation. The implementation of the strategy endorsed in June 2009 started by way of a training and commercial contact mission for African producers in China, and the alignment of national strategies with the regional strategy or, when these do not exist, by an adjustment of the regional strategy with the national priorities. This operation is carried out through participatory workshops in seven countries of the region: Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. □



Ceremony of validation of the COMESA strategy for cotton. From l. to r. : Matthias Knappe (ITC), Fred Kongongo (ACTIF), Stephen Karangizi (COMESA), Rob Jarvis (ACTIF).

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UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

Agrotourism in the Caribbean:

The objective of this activity implemented by the sustainable development network of the WB (WB-SDN) is to bring together all the efforts undertaken at regional level and to facilitate, disseminate and share the information amongst the various stakeholders of the agrotourism sector through the creation of a web portal. This activity is part of a larger programme of promotion of agrotourism by the Organisation of American States (OAS) in the Caribbean. The internet portal - www.caribbeanagrotourism.com - is operational since last March.

Inventory Credits: The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) intervenes in East Africa (Tanzania and possibly Ethiopia) alongside the grain producers to support the setting up of an inventory credit system. This activity is co-funded with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Bill Gates Foundation and the Canadian CIDA for the funding of the future stages.

The programme supports numerous other initiatives the list of which can be explored on the programme's website: www.euacpcommodities.eu

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An initiative



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