



Belize



Significant Achievements 2023

- The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) worked with the Protected Areas Conservation Trust in Belize to develop the third component of the project entitled “Building Community Resilience via Transformative Adaptation”, which was submitted to the Adaptation Fund and approved in late 2023. IICA will have broad responsibility for implementing component 3, aimed at creating opportunities to support alternative livelihoods. It is anticipated that implementation will begin in the first quarter of 2024.
- At the request of the World Bank, IICA participated in a consultancy to carry out an assessment of Belize’s agro-processing sector and produce a country policy note in line with CARICOM’s “25 by 2025” initiative, which calls for scaling up domestic production to offset food imports. The report analyzes (i) trends in agricultural production, post-harvest storage and agro-processing capacity; (ii) national production policies that seek to both regulate and promote the sector with a detailed overview of how market standpoints are affecting the sector as well as constraints accessing international markets; and (iii) proposals for policy options to promote sectoral growth, including detailed schemes for micro, small, medium and large-scale companies to thrive through comprehensive stimulus strategies.
- Through the regional project entitled “Building Export Ready Micro, Small and Medium Sized Agri-Exporters to Access Regional and International Markets”, executed in 9 Caribbean countries (Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago), IICA trained 20 agro-processors on food safety and provided tangible support to three selected small agro-processors. The project was funded by IICA’s Single Fund and FAO with a view to building the capacity of exporters to take advantage of opportunities in markets and to support selected beneficiaries through linkages to buyers and suppliers, access to information to support shipping, testing of products for market access, improvement in packaging and labelling design and enhancement.
- Work continued with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and other collaborating institutions to further develop the Green Climate Fund concept note “Building Climate Resilient Guardians of the Forest and Regenerative Agriculture Communities in Forest Buffer Zones Across Rural Belize”. In 2023, four rounds of GCF feedback were addressed; specifically, counterpart funding from a national development bank was pledged, collaboration with the Belize Livestock Producers Association was included, and activities related to developing the national land use policy were added. The application to the GCF Project Preparation Facility (PPF) grant, to develop the full project proposal, was submitted. Following discussions with GCF officials, it is anticipated that the PPF will be approved for implementation by the second quarter of 2024.
- Towards the end of the year, IICA was requested to support the Belize Agricultural Health Authority application to the Codex Trust Fund to “strengthen food control systems in Belize through a more effective use of *Codex Alimentarius*”. The application was

developed with technical support from the IICA offices in Belize, Costa Rica and the United States and, if approved, would be a three-year project.

- Several activities were implemented in Belize under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) “Support to CARIFORUM States in Furthering the Implementation of their Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Commitments and in Meaningfully Reaping the Benefits of the Agreements – Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Project”, implemented throughout the Caribbean by the IICA Delegation in Barbados. Following the adoption into law in 2022 of the revised Poultry Health Regulations to improve poultry health and opportunities for international trade, which were developed under this project, workshops were held in 2023 across Belize with large-scale and backyard poultry producers to sensitize them on these new regulations and their impact on poultry production. Staff of the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) Central Investigation Laboratory (CIL) received training and technical guidance to improve their capacity to conduct tests for market access in the fisheries sector. The laboratory also received equipment in the form of a Microwave Digestion System. Naledo Belize, which produces turmeric-based products, received technical assistance to address gaps in its food safety management plan and developed a plan for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, enabling the enterprise

to pursue certification for its turmeric paste. An online course on Good Agricultural Practices Audits for fresh produce was launched in July 2023; 20 persons from Belize received a certificate of completion. Additionally, an Agricultural Health and Food Safety Policy Framework for Caribbean countries was finalized and validated in 2023 for use as a template to develop a National AHFS policy and action plan.

- IICA supported the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprises by participating in the Judging Committee to select and recognize the Female, Male and Junior Farmer of the Year during the National Agriculture and Trade Show (NATS), an event that provides farmers, businesses, entrepreneurs, the commercial sector, and other stakeholders with a platform to display their products and showcase the activities in which they are involved. It also provides an opportunity to develop stakeholder linkages and relationships that can help boost the productive sector as well as publicly recognize the arduous efforts of small-scale farmers in contributing to the economy of Belize. The Committee was comprised of stakeholders from three partners in development who took on the responsibility of visiting and evaluating the farms and farmers vying for the title. The farms were scored based on crops (40 pts), livestock (40 pts) and farm administration (20 pts) for a total of 100 points, based on an established score sheet as provided by the Ministry of Agriculture.