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

This project application is the result of an STDF-funded project preparation grant implemented by the International Cocoa Organization from March 17 to December 18. The grant carried out a detailed assessment of research and scientific studies in Latin America and the Caribbean to gauge knowledge levels and the developmental stages of practices to mitigate/remediate cadmium contamination. It also developed a regional strategy framework to identify outstanding gaps and implement recommendations based on consultation with a wide range of public and private stakeholders.

The project proposal was designed as part of this regional approach. It is aimed at supporting the management of cadmium concentration in cocoa and cocoa-derived products in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago to mitigate trade measures imposed by the European Union 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)

Partners
International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)

Background

The project facilitates regional efforts to address cadmium contamination and maintain market access for producers (mainly small-scale farmers) while ensuring the safety of consumers. Best practices are identified and disseminated among beneficiary countries and within the region.

The project provides a platform for agencies involved to implement a regional strategy to mitigate or remediate contamination and work toward maintaining market access for cocoa and cocoa products. In the short term, the project brings relevant

stakeholders together to share knowledge, methods and approaches, and co-develops research strategies to benefit producers and traders. This approach could be replicable for other SPS issues of concern (including other heavy metals, alternative crops and commodities), and other countries in the region and beyond.

Beneficiary countries were selected based on their development status and leadership in the area of cadmium 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 and Tobago, although graduated from the Development Assistance Committee's list of official development assistance recipients and not eligible for STDF funding, 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. These could then be transferred to the other countries and the 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. Funding is sought from other sources to ensure Trinidad and Tobago's involvement.

A gender and environmental analysis was conducted during the PPG phase. Some of the recommendations include:

- Specifically target women in any consultations, surveys and communications, particularly in Colombia and Ecuador.
- Target messages to women through gender-sensitive means.
- Encourage women's participation in all project activities.
- Encourage young growers to grow cocoa in a cadmium-aware manner through mobile messaging.
- Monitor the environmental impact of adding inputs such as lime to the soil.
- Consider alternative uses for soils with high levels of cadmium.
- Use technological tools to disseminate information, taking into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on technical assistance and training activities.