







CARIBBEAN
EXPORT
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BUILDING BUSINESS, TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR A **RESILIENT CARIBBEAN**

ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT - 2021

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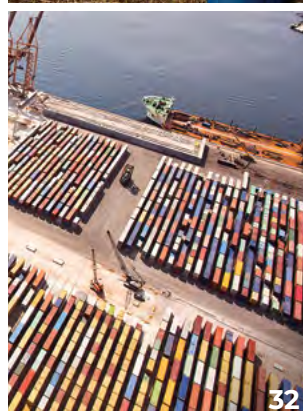
BUILDING BUSINESS, TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR A **RESILIENT CARIBBEAN**

ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT - 2021

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FOREWORD



Sen. The Hon. Dr. Amery Browne
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago
and Chair of CARIFORUM Council of Ministers

As the Chair of the CARIFORUM Council of Ministers, it gives me great pleasure to write this foreword for the Caribbean Export Development Agency's (Caribbean Export) Annual Results Report for the year 2021. We in the Caribbean understand that to fast-track Covid-19 recovery and build a resilient Region, business has a central role as we seek to create jobs and opportunities for our people. Caribbean Export as the lead Agency in the CARIFORUM Caribbean has precisely this remit of working closely with businesses to promote our trade globally and to steer investment our way.

In this regard, I am pleased to see the results that Caribbean Export has delivered across the Region in support of businesses in what have been challenging circumstances for all. The Agency was swift to employ the use of electronic platforms for the capacity building of firms when travel came to a stop across the Region at the height of the pandemic. Given the challenges of accessing finance faced by micro, small and medium scale enterprises, Caribbean Export with the support of the European Union and also the Caribbean Development Bank was able to provide much needed grant financing to many enterprises across the Region.

On the investment promotion side, Caribbean Export was able to profile the opportunities available both at the national and regional levels. This included the first-ever Virtual Investment Forum for Guyana followed by a similar initiative in Trinidad and Tobago. Each of these initiatives saw more than 500 businesses participating from at least 50 countries. Given the priority that we have placed on agriculture in our Region, I was delighted to see that Caribbean Export focused its regional investment efforts in this area with the first-ever Virtual AgTech Investment Forum for the Caribbean. This was headlined by His Excellency, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in his capacity as Lead Head for Agriculture in our community.

At the same time, Caribbean Export worked hard to support businesses access markets such the European Union (EU) taking advantage of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). It is good to see businesses from across the Region speaking about the positive impact of Caribbean Export's work on their enterprises in this report. At the end of the day, it is about impact and outcomes, where it matters, on the ground. Based on this report and what I know of Caribbean Export's work, they understand and have delivered on this imperative.

I would like to thank the European Union for their steadfast support to Caribbean Export making these results possible and I look forward to their continued strong partnership with the Agency. I would like to congratulate Caribbean Export's Board of Directors and staff for a job well done.

It is good to see businesses from across the Region speaking about the positive impact of Caribbean Export's work on their enterprises in this report.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD



Dr. Lynette Holder
Chairperson of the Board of Directors
Caribbean Export Development Agency

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the Caribbean Export Annual Results Report for 2021.

As you will see, 2021 has been a year for change within Caribbean Export, welcoming Deodat Maharaj as our new Executive Director and the development of a transformative strategic plan, to take the Agency to new heights, whilst embracing the challenges of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Throughout the period under review Caribbean Export has remained focused on its objective of enhancing Caribbean business growth with the provision of innovative, targeted initiatives. Having pivoted to offering many of its services virtually, the team at Caribbean Export have increased its penetration into the CARIFORUM private sector. Specifically, the Agency implemented three (3) grant programmes, awarding a total of US\$3.5million to 157 new companies.

This together with 100 plus webinars hosted for the benefit of some 2,500 participants is a clear indication of the commitment of the Management and Staff of Caribbean Export to their vision of driving economic transformation through private sector development.

As we move into the final year of implementing the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP), we are deeply grateful to the support from the European Union (EU) which has facilitated export development and investment promotion initiatives. We are confident that Caribbean Export has laid the foundation to transition seamlessly to a successor programme and remains in the position as the leading development implementation partner in the Caribbean.

As we move into the final year of implementing the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP), we are deeply grateful to the support from the European Union (EU) which has facilitated export development and investment promotion initiatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION



**Her Excellency
Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska**
Head of Delegation of the European Union to Barbados, the
Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS, and CARICOM/CARIFORUM

The European Union has a long history working together with the Caribbean Export Development Agency. Together, we facilitate the growth and development of the Caribbean's private sector while enhancing its export and investment capacity to increase employment creation, inclusiveness, and overall to alleviate poverty.

Since 2017, we have invested over €27.5 million (approx. BBD 60 million) into the "Regional Private Sector Development Programme", which has supported the implementation of the CARIFORUM - EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

In working to enhance competitiveness and promote innovation among small business in CARIFORUM countries, we are pleased to see how the different interventions have contributed to improve the lives of people in the Caribbean.

We congratulate Caribbean Export for their unwavering commitment as well as the beneficiaries of EU support who are making a difference.

Since 2017, we have invested over €27.5 million (approx. BBD 60 million) into the "Regional Private Sector Development Programme", which has supported the implementation of the CARIFORUM - EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

Stimulating intra-regional investment flows and foreign direct investments (FDI) to the Caribbean are critical to the region's economic recovery and sustainable job creation. I am pleased with the efforts made by the Caribbean Export Development Agency to advance the region's vision for economic recovery.

I also congratulate the team on its continuous work to promote FDI interests in key sectors like AgTech throughout the region. I applaud their outstanding performance in 2021, in supporting the private sector to deliver concrete and practical results for the CARIFORUM Caribbean.

**His Excellency,
Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**
President
Cooperative Republic of Guyana



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Deodat Maharaj
Executive Director
Caribbean Export Development Agency

I am delighted to share with you our first Annual Results Report which shows the impact of our work in 2021. 2021 was challenging as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic but at the same time, it was a gratifying year. Caribbean Export, as the trade and investment agency for the CARIFORUM Caribbean (CARICOM and the Dominican Republic), swiftly pivoted to new online platforms and digital approaches to deliver its services. This was done with a sustained focus on directly supporting business.

This 2021 Annual Results Report looks at the impact of work as we implemented the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Private Sector Development Programme and our Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024. Our Strategic Plan focuses on three key objectives: export development and promotion; building the capacities of our investment promotion agencies and profiling the Region as an investment destination; and supporting the services sector as the next frontier for Caribbean business. During this period, supporting women entrepreneurs, green economy transition and helping our businesses transition to digital platforms and e-commerce were accorded the highest priority.

In terms of direct support to businesses, 2021 was a year of strong performance. Just in terms of training, over 2,500 participants benefitted from more than 100 training webinars and capacity building initiatives. The programmes we delivered on e-commerce and digitalisation were particularly successful with high rates of participation. An assessment of the webinars executed in 2021 showed that, there were significantly more female (60%) than male (40%) participants and that most firms (29%) represented were from the renewable energy sector.

In response to the need for small businesses to access finance, three grant calls were issued. The Direct Support Grant Programme (DSGP) and the Dominican Republic MSME Grant Programme (DRGS) funded by the European Union (EU) awarded over US\$2.6M and the Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) funded by Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the EU awarded over US\$891,000. In total, 157 enterprises received direct financial support.

This Report also tells the stories of beneficiaries who have leveraged our services to grow their business, positively impact on their communities and create precious jobs. Firms like Naledo in Belize and Taste of the Caribbean in Jamaica are examples of what has been possible due to our work. In the area of investment, Regional Investor of the Year, Itel International opened new operations in Saint Lucia creating over 750 jobs.

The Report also speaks to the agility of the Agency in swiftly changing its approach on the investment front and delivering high profile, high-impact services even at the height of the pandemic. Together with the European Union, we supported Guyana to convene the country's first ever Virtual Investment Forum in March 2021. This was followed by a similar and equally successful initiative in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2021, which saw over 700 participants from more than 70 countries. Recognising the imperative to boost agriculture, Caribbean Export has also been at the forefront of promoting investment in the agricultural sector and convened the first-ever Caribbean AgTech Investment Summit headlined by H.E. Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali which saw 500 participants from 60 countries.

At Caribbean Export, we recognise that to realise our vision of "Building Business, Transforming Lives for a Resilient Caribbean" requires partnerships. We are grateful for the strong partnership with the EU to deliver results at a time when the role of the private sector in generating precious jobs and opportunity are more important than ever. We have also been working with partners such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). For the coming year, we will be working with others such as Republic Bank Ltd. Forging new partnerships based on shared values will represent a continuing theme as we move forward.

In 2021, recognising the need to scale up our direct outreach to businesses, we revamped our communications and outreach. This enabled our communications to be viewed in 204 countries. We also had the highest number of views of our website with 331,085 views in 2021. The intention is to continue to profile Caribbean goods and services as well as investment opportunities with this growing audience.

In closing, I would like to thank our partners, Board of Directors and my staff for their hard work and support throughout 2021, that has enabled us to deliver these strong results.

ONE-STOP, NON-STOP SHOP FOR SUPPORT SERVICES



Caribbean Export is the regional trade and investment promotion agency focused on building a resilient Caribbean by providing cutting-edge and high-impact support to the private sector. Through working closely with businesses to increase exports and attract investment, we contribute towards the creation of jobs, transformation of our economies and support the Caribbean to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We implement a range of innovative and focused initiatives designed to facilitate Caribbean businesses expansion nationally, regionally and internationally into high value markets whilst taking advantage of special market access. We assist businesses that have the export potential or are already exporting to increase their capacity and competitiveness, to boost export earnings and create precious jobs.

As we seek to build businesses and transform lives to create a resilient Caribbean, we are committed to providing services in areas that will generate the greatest transformation. These areas include e-commerce; digitalization; adoptions of green energy; and green and blue economy transition. In addition, recognizing that trade in services is the next frontier for Caribbean business, we provide support to non-tourism related service providers and the creative industries to build entrepreneurship and leverage opportunities created by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Caribbean Export understands the needs for climate action and green economy transition in our small economies. Our work in investment promotions is laser focused on attracting foreign direct investment in renewable energy, agricultural technology and business process outsourcing. With a strategy of pooling several countries to build scale, we serve as the Secretariat of the 23 investment promotion agencies across the Caribbean, and we work closely with them to develop regional approaches and products to steer investments our way.

With offices in Barbados, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, we have a proven track record of performance with an annual implementation rate of close to 85%.

Caribbean Export is building business, transforming lives for a resilient Caribbean.



OUR VISION

**To be the leading Agency that drives
Caribbean economic transformation through
private sector development.**



OUR MISSION

**To provide innovative, targeted, initiatives
designed to enhance Caribbean business
growth, sustainability, and jobs.**



BUILDING BUSINESS, TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR A RESILIENT CARIBBEAN

For over two decades Caribbean Export has successfully contributed to the growth of the regional private sector through economic development and integration programming. With a task of internationalizing regional SME's and contributing toward regional transformation we recognized that the Region's development trajectory is at a pivotal point.

We understand that innovation, adaptability, competitiveness, and access to financing will be needed by firms in order to withstand the impact from future shocks and to achieve regional recovery. Essentially, we must build stronger and more resilient businesses.

Caribbean Export 2021-2024 Strategic Plan

The plan sets out a transformational agenda for the Region. With business firmly at the center, an innovative, high performing Caribbean Export is supporting the development of a resilient competitive private sector, that creates high value jobs leading to the economic growth and development of our Region consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key to the development of our strategic plan was input from all areas of the Agency and a collaboration that brought everyone together through a virtual retreat. Here we were able to define ourselves, develop our vision and mission and agree upon our core values and strategic direction.

We aim to support the Caribbean's private sector transition from national firms to regional and ultimately international businesses and have outlined three strategic objectives to achieve this.



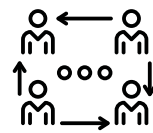
1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE EXPORT

Focused export development and promotion to increase private sector competitiveness.



2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE INVESTMENT

Strengthened capacities in Caribbean Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) to facilitate investments.



3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SERVICES

Targeted support to the services sector as the next frontier in Caribbean business.



Our Areas of Focus

Over the next 3 years, our focus is on the areas that have the greatest impact on firm competitiveness, job creation and export potential. We believe those areas are:

- digital transformation and e-commerce,
- adoption of green energy and energy efficiency practices,
- enhancing operational efficiency to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive marketplace, and
- conforming to international standards and certifications.

The promotion of green energy is a major theme for Caribbean Export, through a combination of technical assistance, training and coaching supported by grant funding, aimed to build "Sustainable Businesses" across the region.



Our Target Sectors

- Agro-processing (incl. nutraceuticals)
- Light manufacturing
- Green economy
- Blue entrepreneurship
- Non-tourism linked services, e.g.
 - Education, business and professional, ICT, creative & cultural
- Investment sectors, e.g.
 - Renewable energy, Agricultural technology, Business process outsourcing, hotel and resort development.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT COUNT. A NEW WAY OF WORKING

To realise our plan, the Agency places emphasis on consolidating existing partnerships and building new ones to mobilize resources, forging vital connections and pathways to advance the private sector.

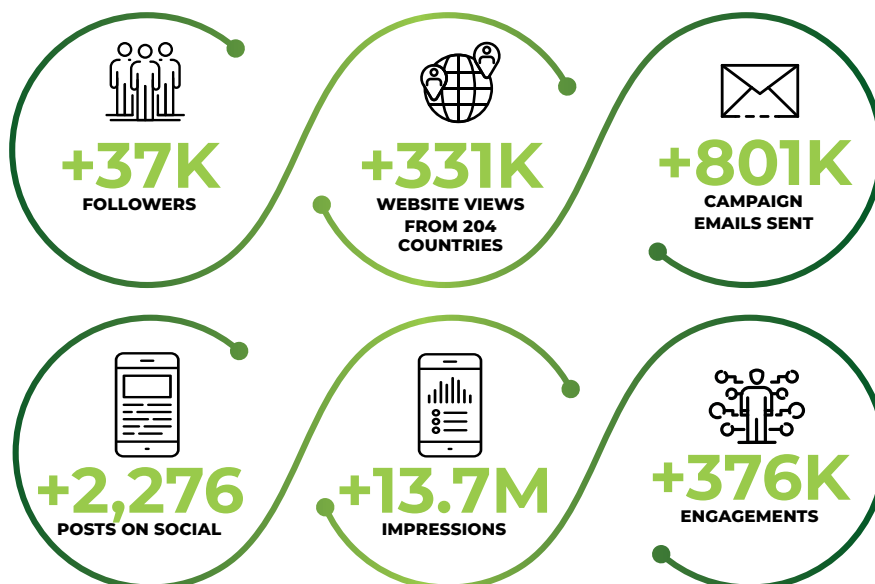


Caribbean Export recognizes the value of strong partnerships, exemplified by the long-standing successful cooperation with the European Union. As the Agency continues to implement the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP) we hope to leverage this success to expand further.

The Agency is actively strengthening results-based management (RBM) frameworks, reporting structures and its overall communications to engage and interact effectively with a broad range of stakeholders and expand its existing networks.

Focus is placed on building knowledge capability and sharing throughout the region by enhancing internal and external collaboration; capturing and sharing best practices and lessons learnt; supporting the establishment of communities of practice and enhancing client relationship management.

Recognising the value of communications and advocacy, the Agency has enhanced communications and outreach in both traditional and non-traditional media resulting in an increase in its online audience by approx. 25% through the implementation of a range of tactics.



YEAR IN REVIEW - STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS



+100
Webinars hosted



+2,500
Beneficiaries

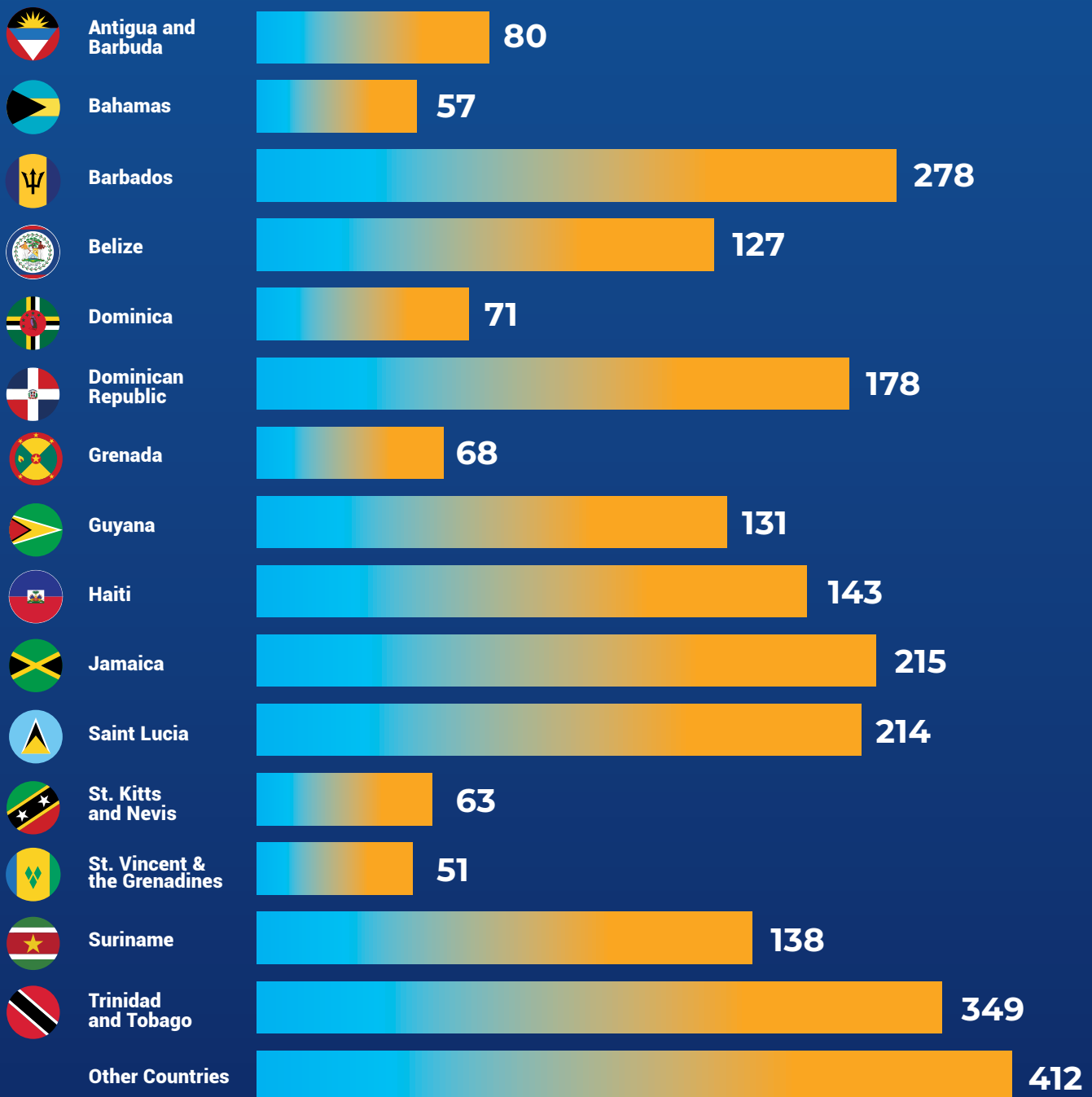


60%
Women

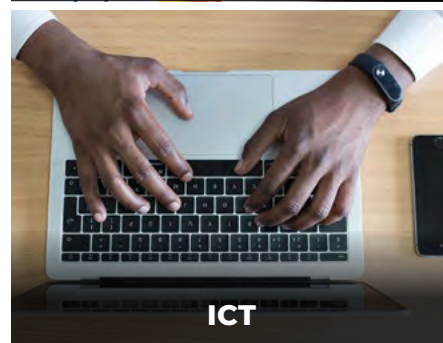


40%
Men

BENEFICIARIES BY COUNTRY



KEY SECTORS SUPPORTED



+165,000
Website Visitors
www.carib-export.com



+37,000
Social Media
Followers



204
Countries Viewed
Content



3
Grant Programmes



157 Grants
awarded in 2021



US\$3,549,595.83
awarded to small businesses

FACILITATING BUSINESS CONTINUITY THROUGH GRANT FUNDING

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest disrupter to most businesses and economies globally over the past two years. Given this, Caribbean Export has had to quickly assess where support is needed, to deploy much-needed resources that bring meaningful and immediate relief to the region's private sector. Grant funding has been a vital instrument, providing firms with assistance to sustain their businesses during this tumultuous period.



In 2021, Caribbean Export implemented three grant facilities; the Technical Assistance Programme (TAP); the Direct Support Grants Programme (DSGP) and the Dominican Republic MSME Grant Programme (DRGS). The TAP is a new programme rolled out in May 2021, in collaboration with the EU and the CDB to help firms navigate the fallout of the pandemic. The CDB contributed a total of US\$600,000 towards the TAP which not only provides grant funding but also is set to offer a holistic approach to supporting Caribbean MSMEs impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with the provision of a suite of capacity building tools to complement the technical assistance to be gained through the grant funding. A total of 61 companies from ¹14 CDB borrowing member countries have been awarded grants totaling US\$891,205.66 via the TAP.

Launching in October was the grant facility specifically for firms based in the Dominican Republic which has awarded a total of US\$98,401.56 in grant funding to ten companies. Under the DSGP which also launched in October 2021, 86 grants were awarded totaling approximately US\$2,608,740.33.

The main objectives of the programmes are to provide support to the CARIFORUM private sector on a non-reimbursable basis; to support business continuity; to facilitate increase in exports; and to ensure that firms can leverage the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Free Trade Agreement between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic.

TAP	DRGS	DSGP
61 grants awarded	10 grants awarded	86 grants awarded
US\$891,205.66	US\$98,401.56	US\$2,608,740.33

¹Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago (Eligible BMCs)



TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED IN 2021 BY COUNTRY

157 GRANTS AWARDED





IMPACTING LIVES THROUGH GRANT FUNDING

The Direct Assistance Grants Scheme (DAGS) is a reimbursable grant programme providing access to finance to CARIFORUM based firms. In 2021, the Agency conducted an impact assessment of the 2019 DAGS 2nd Call for Proposals. This assessment identified some of the impacts the programme had on recipients and the utilization of the funding to effectively navigate the pandemic.

From the companies under review, 22 new products were developed, and 20 new markets penetrated enabling over US\$600K in revenue to be generated and the creation of 71 jobs. One company, Tenderoni Food Inc, noted that it was due to the implementation of their DAGS project that they were able to increase their production, and subsequently export more products to the regional market. "Without the DAGS funding there was no way Tenderoni would be able to accomplish its objectives for the domestic and export growth. In 2020 the company grew by 25% and this is directly attributable to the DAGS" Rudy Gurley – Tenderoni Food Inc (Saint Lucia).

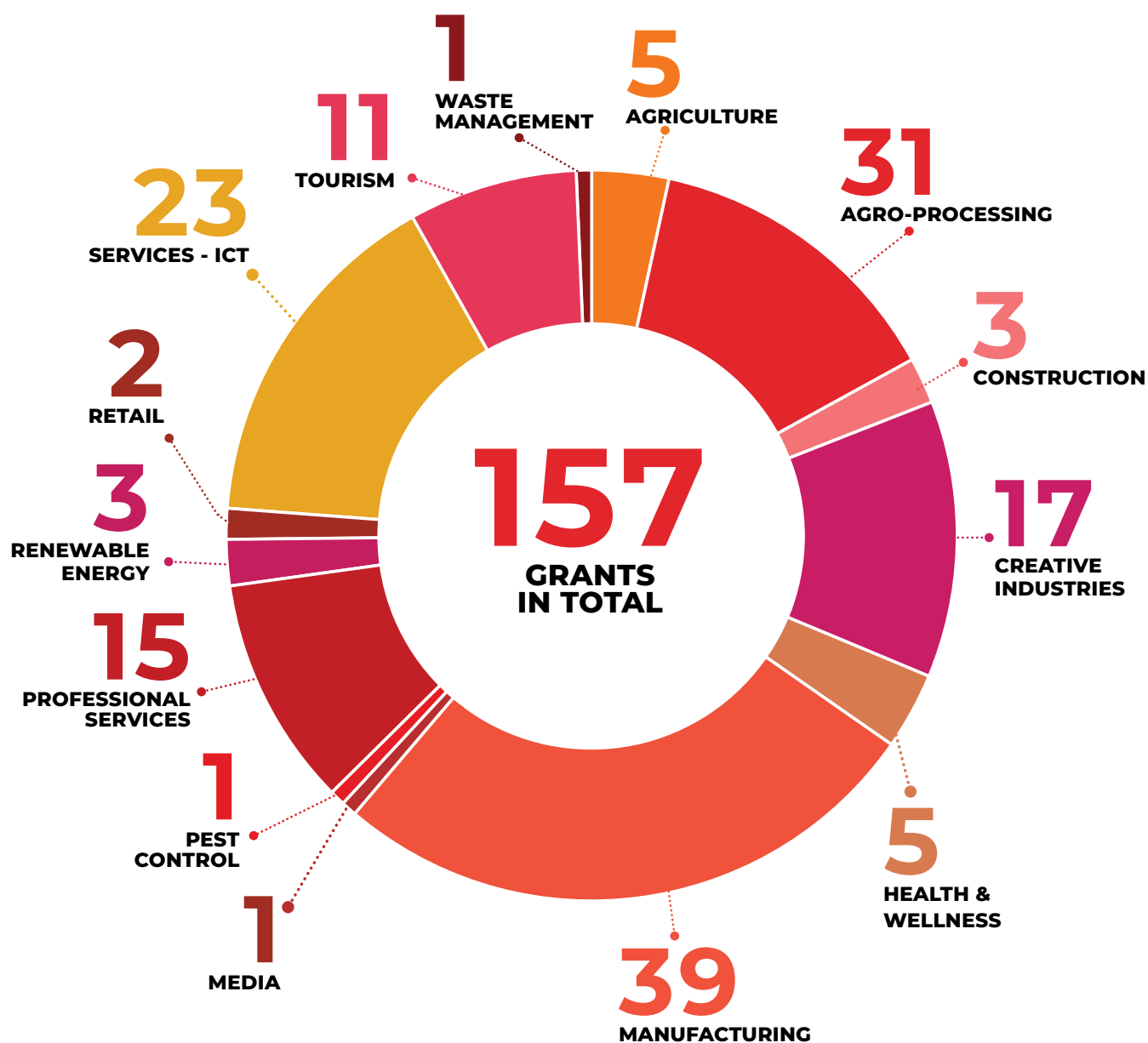
The DAGS programme has been crucial for many firms, their communities, and the economic stability of the region. Whilst the disruptions to the global supply chains, coupled with the grounding of aircraft and cargo ships presented a major obstacle for exports from the region, the DAGS programme gave firms a greater ability to pivot and navigate during uncertainty.

Caribbean Export has been expanding its scope to include renewable energy capacity-building initiatives and notably, firms have shown a keen interest in renewable energy, which is reflected in some of the DAGS projects that have been implemented, namely solar power, and water and waste management systems. Five firms that were awarded grant funding executed green or renewable energy projects in 2019.

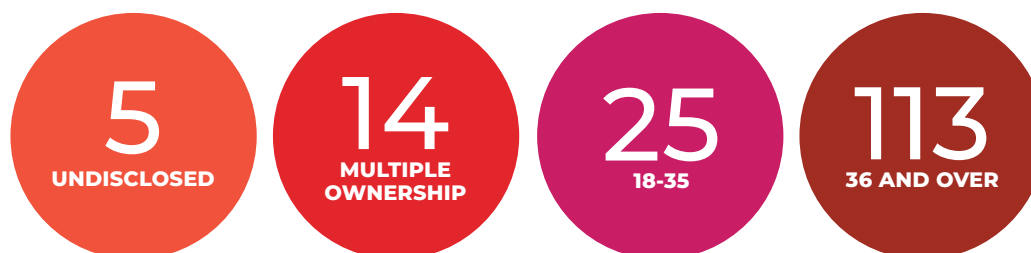
With the support of the DAGS grant, Plympton Farms was able to construct a 80,000 sqft storage warehouse equipped with a loading dock, thus increasing our ability to hold inventory and reducing the time required for order fulfillment. During the COVID pandemic, the increased storage capacity allowed us to continue purchasing from smallholder farmers at significant quantities despite reduced export orders from our own customers. This undertaking has ensured a stable market for smallholder farmers and improved livelihoods, which has been especially impactful during the pandemic.

**Kapil Mohabir –
Plympton Farms (Guyana)**

GRANTS AWARDED BY COMPANY SECTOR



GRANTS AWARDED BY COMPANY OWNERSHIP BY AGE



CERTIFICATION CAPITAL EQUALITY
GOODS UPGRADE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
RENEWABLE ENERGY
BUSINESS AWARDS
GROWTH GRANTS GIVEN
CAPITAL EXPORT IPAS GLOBAL SERVICES JOBS TRADE WEBSINARS RESOURCES ASSETS SUSTAINABILITY
DIGITALISATION INITIATION
OF BUSINESS
CAPACITY SPECIALTY OCCUPATION INNOVATION
BUILDING FUNDING
ADVERTISING MANUFACTURING BUILDING RESILIENCE
EFFICIENCY
DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS
GROWTH COMMERCE
CAPITALIZATION
& MARKETING
PROMOTION
RENEWABLE

FEMALE FARMERS IN JAMAICA EMPOWERED BY 'A TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN'

Jamaican entrepreneur Sonya Dunstan started her small business 'A Taste of the Caribbean Ltd' in 2005, after spending several years in the hospitality industry.

Sonya's company partners with a network of Jamaican female farmers in remote areas to grow and supply the seasonal fruits and vegetables used in its preserves, chutney, jellies, and cooking sauces. Under the brand 'Dunson's' the female entrepreneur produces a range that includes Caribbean staples such as guava, mango, sorrel, lemongrass, and ginger. All these fresh ingredients are cultivated by women on low incomes who usually face fluctuating demand and prices for their crops.

"Our famers live in deep rural communities in Jamaica," Sonya explains. "A lot of these women are economically challenged and disadvantaged so I went in and told them that whatever they planted I would buy, and I also pay a fair price. This has benefitted the farmers and by extension their children, their communities, and even the entire island."

Despite the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, she has been able to maintain and improve her business because of funding from Caribbean Export's Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS).

Our famers live in deep rural communities in Jamaica," Sonya explains. "A lot of these women are economically challenged and disadvantaged so I went in and told them that whatever they planted I would buy, and I also pay a fair price.





Sonya used her grant to purchase new solar equipment which significantly reduced her utility bill and enhanced the company's efficiency and competitiveness.

She also expanded her product line to include curry powder and jerk seasoning; developed new branding and labelling materials; bolstered her online presence with a website; and completed all the preliminary steps to achieve HACCP certification.

Sonya says: "I made the money stretch, I did so much with it, and I am so appreciative because sometimes you have an idea and because of a lack of funding you cannot manifest what you are dreaming about. Caribbean Export gave me the opportunity to be successful and I am so grateful for that."

Having received export orders for her curry powder to the UK, US, Canada, the Cayman Islands, and the Bahamas, she has been able to employ ten (10) seasonal workers and is planning to further increase the number of farmers she employs in April.

The company's enhanced competitiveness has also enabled more local supermarkets to gain interest in the Dunson's range of products stocking them on their shelves and with the anticipated increase in tourism post pandemic Sonya is hopeful there will be an increase in demand for 'A Taste of the Caribbean' to take home.



INTEGRATED CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUCCESS



Over 100
WEBINARS HOSTED



+2,500
BENEFICIARIES



60%
WOMEN PARTICIPATING

At Caribbean Export we believe building a business' capacity through training, technical assistance, trade and business intelligence as well as funding options, is key to enhance private sector development in the Caribbean. Since the pandemic, the Agency has also had to pivot in the delivery of initiatives to ensure a more focussed and targeted suite of tools, aimed at impacting on the technical, knowledge, financial, production and service delivery capacity of firms.

Over 100 webinars have been hosted by the Agency during 2021, ranging from capacity-building topics such as e-commerce development, market intelligence to investment forums and export promotion initiatives to support market penetration. Also included were pre-packaged programmes such as ProNET, Services Go Global (SGG) and Business of Music (BOM), amongst others which support the increased use of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

ProNET

ProNET is a business management training programme for small businesses who want to grow their business and become more competitive. Given the travel restriction ProNET was delivered virtually to firms in The Bahamas, Belize, Haiti, and Jamaica in cooperation with national BSOs. A total of 122 people completed the following modules: cost and financial management; export marketing; quality management; information & knowledge management and production management.

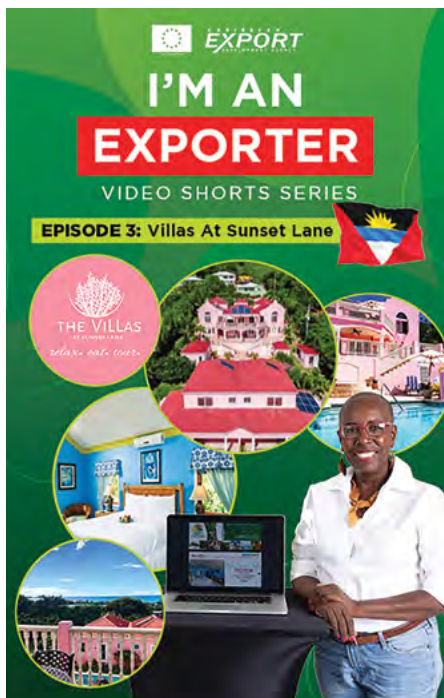


Market Intelligence

In collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) a series of webinars aimed at 'Building strong trade capacity in the Caribbean with market intelligence: understanding international trade statistics' was hosted between March – April 2021. Over 900 participants from across CARIFORUM joined the 3-part series which homed in on: understanding international trade statistics; assessing market requirements such as tariffs and non-tariff measures and how to use the export potential map and other free databases on trade. Further, through a partnership with ITC the Agency embedded the ITC Market Access Map and Trade Map into the CE Intelligence portal.

Improving Digital Capacity

Today online presence is no longer an optional investment for food companies to engage consumers and buyers. As many B2B events become virtual or hybrid, small and medium enterprises must be able to clearly demonstrate what differentiates their brand and products. Caribbean Export partnered with ITC on a 7-part series of webinars 'Taste Online' that provided a roadmap and key considerations to overcome commercial barriers and trained how to use marketing materials to improve business. Over 700 participants from across CARIFORUM were able to increase their knowledge in digital marketing, and the use of marketing tools to engage buyers and consumers.



Using the CARIFORUM-EU EPA

The CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is more than a free trade agreement, as it contains a strong development component with clear links to development aid for adjustment and modernisation of CARIFORUM economies. The development of businesses lays firmly at the centre as the Agency continues to implement the 11th EDF Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP). Since the signing and adoption of the EPA in 2008 the Agency has created a range of communication tools to increase its understanding for businesses to leverage the EPA benefits.

In 2021, the Agency released a new set of videos featuring a cross section of businesses that have participated in Caribbean Export interventions and programmes using both the agreements development component and the trade facility to export into European markets. The video series titled 'I'm an Exporter' shared real experiences from business owners in areas such as intellectual property, how to use quota free access, how the EPA is supporting creatives and the services sector, amongst others.

Through dissemination and promotion on the Agency's social channels including YouTube to date the ten (10) videos have aggregated 174K views.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – GOING GREEN IN THE CARIBBEAN

Caribbean countries recognise that it is strategically advantageous to embrace the new economy offered by low carbon industries and sectors in light of the generally high fuel import bills experienced across the region. With some of the highest electricity prices in the world, it has translated into uncompetitive exports, exposure to external economic shocks and volatility in oil prices. Considering this, Caribbean Export's role in export development and promotion, as well as investment promotion, is driven by the need to create sustainable industries that not only contribute to increased foreign exchange and economic development, but also take into consideration environmental impact. Caribbean Export understands having



GREEN TO COMPETE

ACTIVATING GREEN TRADE.

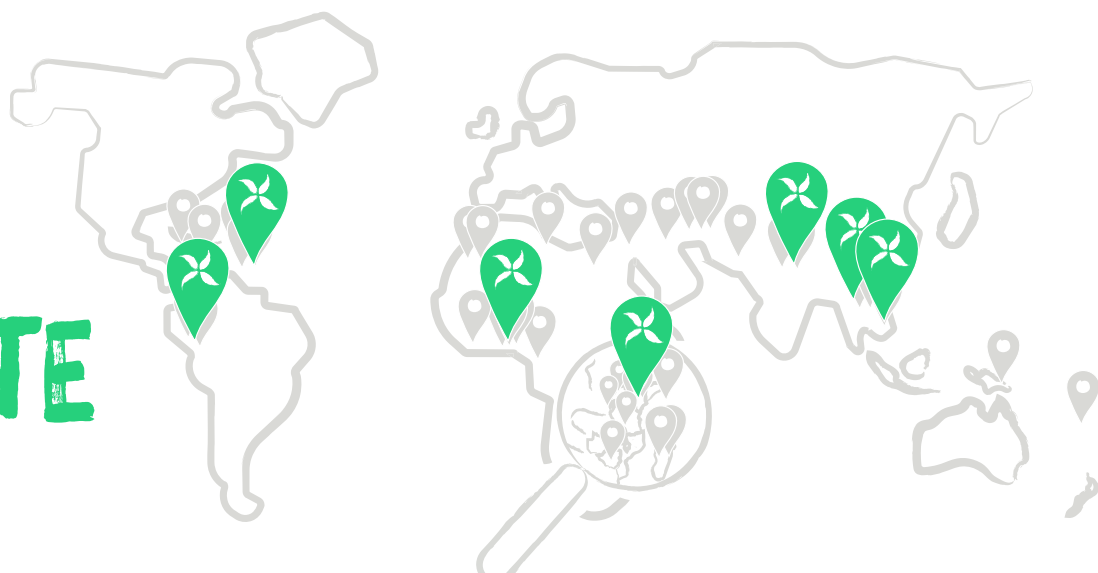


Caribbean Export understands having strong partnerships is key to effectively maximize efforts and resources to support SMEs in the region particularly for sustainable development. The ITC GreenToCompete (GTC) Hub Caribbean project exemplifies how the Agency is strategically developing strong partnerships for the benefit of private sector development and the economic transformation of the Caribbean.

Hosted by Caribbean Export through a signed MOU with ITC, the GTC Hub Caribbean activates small businesses to go green by developing their capacity and knowledge to implement smart green business practices. The GTC Hub Caribbean is part of a global activation network that through strengthening links and innovating together is working towards making green trade a reality.

Caribbean Export role in hosting the GTC Caribbean Hub for small businesses is to support their capacity building to implement smart green business practices, access green finance as well as enhance their competitiveness in global supply chains. In addition, Hubs also mobilise other local institutions and organisations, the private sector, and government to provide an enabling business environment and support services for small businesses.

GREEN TO COMPETE HUBS



Launched in February 2021 the pilot project will run until December 2022 in collaboration with national business support organisations (BSOs) in Barbados, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. In addition, further partnerships with the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) and Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE) support the implementation of these sustainable business strategies that involve resource efficiency, voluntary sustainability standards, climate resilience, access to green finance and international marketing.

To date the GTC Hub has implemented a number of activities: A webinar on the first module on Resource Efficiency and Circular Production (RECP) was held in September 2021, where 56 persons were in attendance, 29 of whom were women and 27 were men from agro-processing, manufacturing and professional services sectors. Twenty-three participants attended a subsequent 'training of trainer' session in October 2021 to ensure knowledge transfer and the future increase of scope.

The Agency also facilitated a Voluntary Sustainable Standards (VSS) webinar, which brought together 113 participants in November 2021. Sixty-one participants were women and 52 were men from the agro-processing, manufacturing, professional services and ICT sectors. Sixteen participants attended a 'training of trainer' session in November 2021.

The Agency's strategic approach to fostering deeper partnerships considers the regional agenda, as established by the CARIFORUM Energy Policy (2013) and the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Roadmap and Strategy (C-SERMS). The Agency is eager to continue deepening its relationships with regional partners to form greater synergy and convergence with the programmes of other regional organizations which will further support the regional agenda.

'GREENING THE CARIBBEAN' ONE ISLAND AT A TIME



Social enterprise 'Greening the Caribbean (GtC)' is on a mission to preserve the natural beauty of the Caribbean "one island at a time".

Environmental advocate, Wayne Neale, established his pioneering waste management and recycling business in Saint Lucia in 2014, with the primary aim of educating the public and private sector on best environmental practices.

GtC is the first business of its kind to collect waste at source and transport it to a 'Recycling Services Centre' where a team of six full-time employees disassemble, sort, and categorise it into e-waste, aluminium cans, plastic bottles, metals, and cardboard for export to international manufacturing hubs.

"Initially my idea was to go into the area of renewable energy," Wayne says. "But I soon realised that the more visible crisis in play was to do with pollution and waste, so I changed the business model, and decided to establish a knowledge centre for environmental management."

He adds: "Greening the Caribbean is a social entrepreneurship association that provides environmental, waste management, recycling, and pollution prevention services. Our vision is to ensure the environmental sustainability and natural beauty of the Caribbean, one island at a time, starting in Saint Lucia."

Saint Lucia's government wants the island to be landfill free by 2030 and GtC is playing a key role in helping the country reach that goal. In 2018, the company exported 242,000 kilos of recyclable waste and after qualifying for Caribbean Export's Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS) in 2019, the amount of recyclable and e-waste it exported increased by 24% and 43% respectively.

Wayne also used the Direct Assistance Grant to incorporate the business name to enhance its credibility and invested in additional marketing materials to raise the profile of GtC's environmental mandate.

Over the next 12-18 months, Wayne plans to double his customer base from nine to 18 businesses, secure additional heavy machinery, and purchase the 10,700 sq. ft commercial building that currently houses GtC's recycling centre.

Wayne is convinced that recycling can boost the economic development of the Caribbean and rejects any suggestion that the region is too small to make revenue from its waste.

Wayne states: "I keep reading Caribbean economies are too small for a viable recycling business. That it is not feasible and not enough material is generated but I discount that completely...What we are doing at GtC is creating jobs, it is definitely going to bring people out of poverty, and it is the best way for this region to contribute to the circular economy."

INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

The Caribbean has great potential in agricultural and agro-processing sectors, however, is vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. In view of this threat, it is imperative the sector embraces the digital technologies that are transforming agriculture and food production. The spread of mobile technologies, remote-sensing services and distributed computing are improving smallholders' access to information, inputs and markets, increasing production and productivity, streamlining supply chains and reducing operational costs. Consequently, there is great potential for strengthening market linkages and helping farmers, fishers and agri-food businesses to catch up with current best practices and technologies.

In addition, through the promotion of inclusive and sustainable agricultural development, these sectors can contribute to overcoming major socioeconomic and environmental challenges, including food and nutrition insecurity, obesity, youth unemployment, gender inequality, the unsustainable use of natural resources, and climate change. It is against this background the Caribbean Export has implemented a number of initiatives to support this sector.



CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY (AgTech) INVESTMENT FORUM

Creating opportunities to boost the AgTech sector is a priority for Caribbean Export. The Agency hosted the first Caribbean AgTech Investment Forum in collaboration with the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA), the Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA) and Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP) on October 5-7, 2021. The event sought to promote the Caribbean as a place for investment in high-tech agribusiness ventures, generate investment and re-investment into the AgTech sector in the Caribbean and showcase opportunities or areas for investment in high-tech or smart agricultural ventures.

Attracting more than 500 delegates over the 3-days from 67 countries, attendees explored how agricultural technology companies in the Caribbean can bolster productivity, decrease costs and mitigate the effects of climate change by adopting

“Since the hosting of our first AgTech Summit, CAIPA has worked with Caribbean Export to develop an AgTech Working Group which includes CompeteCaribbean, COLEACP and the CARICOM Secretariat. We have also developed a draft AgTech Strategy for implementation this year with targeted initiatives to attract FDI into the region. Investment in agriculture is our best weapon against continued food insecurity and CAIPA intends to play its part in alleviating this unsustainable situation.”

Annette Mark – President of CAIPA





“CABA is committed to working with Caribbean Export and CAIPA to attract investment in advanced systems and technologies into the agricultural sector in the region. Unless we use modern technology in food production in the Caribbean, our region will not attain the objective of reducing 25% of our food imports by 2025.”

Vassel Stewart, President of CABA

powered equipment and advanced technologies. More than 25 business meetings were held, and 3 positive investment prospects generated. Some of the areas of interest include vertical farming companies, developers of greenhouses and irrigation systems, firms with sustainable fertilizer solutions, and those with innovative platforms allowing for data gathering and mining by farmers.

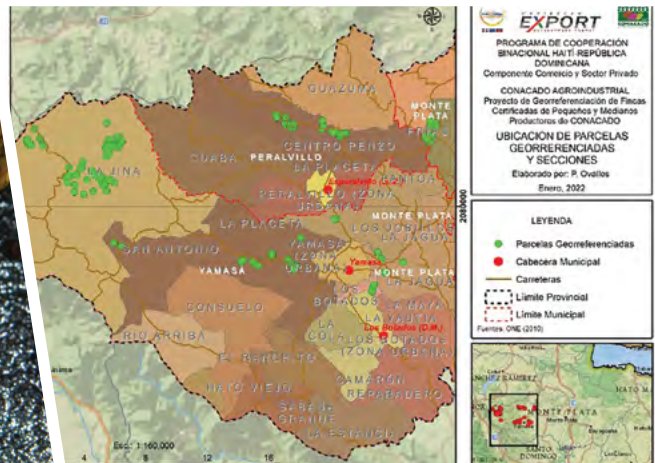
Further, the Agency produced a catalogue of investment opportunities in the AgTech sector throughout the 23 member states of CAIPA which was provided to potential investors ahead of the event and is available via the Agency's website. To date the publication has been downloaded over 550 times.



BRINGING AgTech TO COCOA FARMS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Confederación Nacional de Cacaocultores Dominicano (Conacado) is the country's largest producer and exporter of organic cocoa products accounting for 49.8% of the country's total production. The organisation partners with some 1000 farms who supply cocoa however do not hold the internationally recognised EU / NOP organic certification.

To support increasing their competitiveness and their inclusion in the global market CONACADO were supported with the purchase of thirty (30) handheld GPS systems to enable them to georeference 1000 cocoa farms affiliated with them. A total of twenty-one (21) employees (17 males and 4 females) were trained on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), in the process of field data collection and feed Geographic Information Systems (GIS). To date 230 farms have been georeferenced and the introduction of this AgTech will increase their efficiency and enable CONACADO to obtain international organic certification.



EXPORT AND GROW – OPENING NEW MARKETS

Our task at Caribbean Export is the internationalization of regional firms. This requires them to become more competitive and export-oriented, in addition to supporting the realization of their potential in exporting their products and services. In doing so, they become the incubators of change, growth and job creation, holding the key to social and economic development of the Caribbean.

Caribbean Export is dedicated to finding innovative ways to provide CARIFORUM firms with the tools to build operational capacity, enhance competitiveness and penetrate new markets. The Agency has launched a range of innovative initiatives, to support the private sector to navigate, recover, and export more products and services during the pandemic and beyond with a suite of training programmes and export promotion activities.

According to the International Trade Centre (ITC), the CARIFORUM Caribbean's (CARICOM and the Dominican Republic) largest export market in 2020 was the United States of America, with an export value of approximately US\$10.583 billion, followed by the European Union, valued at US\$2.8 billion in the same year.

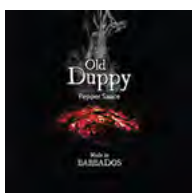


LAUNCH TO MARKET PROGRAMME

The Launch to Market Programme which commenced in August 2021, seeks to support small businesses in the 'sauces and condiments' agro-processing sector to enhance their export capacity; understand their target markets; launch products; and develop strategies to increase sales in the European Union and UK markets. Given the vast geography and diverse consumer preferences of these markets, research has been critical in narrowing and prioritising the target markets. Split into four key elements, the programme assists firms to prepare their products for Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium and the UK; provide coaching; development of a go-to-market strategy and supports introductions for business-to-business sales.



Five export ready and exporting businesses from CARIFORUM Member States were selected to participate in this programme.



OLD DUPPY

BARBADOS

Pepper sauces,
BBQ sauce, Bajan
ganoush



NALEDO BELIZE

BELIZE

Turmeric paste



CHIEF BRAND

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Seasoning, spices,
condiments and sauces



SUGARTOWN ORGANICS

ST KITTS AND NEVIS

Pepper sauce, vegan
products



PRINGAS

**ST VINCENT AND
THE GRENADINES**

Green seasoning, pepper
sauce, jellies

EXPORT PROMOTION

Export promotion is a key activity to support market penetration. The Agency supports export ready firms to participate in industry events as a mechanism to introducing products to new markets and supporting CARIFORUM businesses to export and grow. The COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to in-person events, however, the Agency has facilitated the participation at virtual industry events such as Food Matters Live 2020 and 2021 and hosted the Absolutely Caribbean Virtual Expo in 2020.

Participation in other trade promotion activities is starting to bear fruit. As a result of participating in the virtual editions of Food Matters Live 2020 and 2021, a UK based industry event dedicated to ingredient manufacturers, there has been significant interest in immune boosting and other natural products owing to the growing lifestyle trends for natural and 'free-from' products. In fact, at the time of writing, Caribbean Export was contacted by a buyer in the US interested in purchasing an amount of seamoss (more commonly known as Irish moss) from one of the participating firms. This is the first step in what promises to be a beneficial trade relationship for this firm to increase its exports in this in-demand product.

Influencer Marketing to Support Market Penetration

In 2021, Caribbean Export launched a series of cooking show videos that had been developed in collaboration with UK based Caribbean food influencers, Original Flava. The 10-part 'How-to' series showcased Caribbean food products used to create a series of recipes including drinks and were aired on the Original Flava Facebook, Instagram and YouTube Channels.



TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

+12M

TOTAL VIEWS

+309,650

NALEDO – LEVERAGING SUPPORT TO MAKE IT COUNT

Penetrating new markets doesn't always happen overnight, and can take several years of building relationships, knocking on doors and consistently being seen at industry events. No one understands this more than Belize based turmeric paste producers Naledo. The company has leveraged Caribbean Export's export promotion support to attend SIAL Paris 2018, CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum Germany 2019, Food Matters Live 2020 and 2021, Absolutely Caribbean Virtual Expo 2020, in addition to receiving grant funding, participating in training programmes and featuring in the Original Flava / Absolutely Caribbean cooking show series.

In 2020 their wildcrafted, whole root turmeric paste called 'Truly Turmeric' won the 'New Product of the Year' award at Food Matters Live UK in 2020. News of this high coveted award rebounded across the industry, leading to new contracts being signed with a European distributor that had been following the company since meeting them at the world's largest food innovation exhibition SIAL in 2018, where they were shortlisted for a product innovation award. 'Truly Turmeric' will now be found in natural food stores and other outlets throughout Switzerland, Germany and France. The first pallet heading to Europe in 2021 will contain 1,500 bottles of Naledo's flagship 'Truly Turmeric' paste and a smaller 125g bottle has been developed specifically for the European market.

Naledo partners with over 300 small-scale growers in 20 communities across Belize to source their raw turmeric. Their policy of growers planting indigenous trees has resulted in over 900 trees being planted to sequester over 45,000kg of CO2 into the environment. Further, eliminating the use of herbicides or pesticides saves over 2,900 liters of chemicals from entering the environment. This together with irrigation free, wild state growing saves over 1.6 million gallons of water and makes the crop more climate resilient. Naledo's growers are 40% women, and all earn 8 times the fair-trade price for their turmeric. Their dedication to sustainability has been able to add US \$2.28 million to rural communities.

300

small-scale growers

900

trees being planted

+1.6M

gallons of water saved

CARIFORUM-UK SUMMIT



The CARIFORUM – United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) entered into force in January 2021. Caribbean Export in partnership with the UK Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office organised a virtual summit in November 2021 to raise awareness of the trade agreement and to explore opportunities to expand trade under this new deal.

Considering the importance of trade and investment to their relationship over time, this virtual summit focused on the tangible opportunities for the CARIFORUM and the United Kingdom to expand trade and investment, offering perspectives on potential benefits of the agreement for the private sector, and identifying priorities for prospective traders and investors under the new partnership agreement.

This high-level summit attracted around 300 participants from the Caribbean, the UK and other parts of the world including high ranking government representatives, businesses, investors and trade promotion experts from both parties. Through panel discussions, academia, but more importantly, the business community provided insights on the operations and implementation of the agreement and made observations on how goods and services providers as well as investors could benefit.

The event was successful in increasing knowledge about ways in which the EPA can benefit firms and investors by raising awareness among CARIFORUM and UK traders and investors about EPA-related opportunities, specifically how they can take advantage of the agreement in practice and how governments and institutions can support EPA implementation.

TOTAL ONLINE AUDIENCE

51,549

Top countries:
USA, Barbados, UK,
Jamaica and The Bahamas



21

posts

9255

impressions

2.11%

engagement



6

unique posts

32

shares

5,363

people reached

1,013

joined FB Live



8

unique posts

4210

impressions

2.6%

engagement



5

email campaigns

31,675

recipients



SERVICES – THE NEW FRONTIER

Within the Caribbean region, the services sector contributes approximately 69 per cent, on average, to GDP in CARIFORUM members states, creating diverse employment opportunities, and generating foreign exchange. Further, services providers play a central role in the creation of goods for export and in view of this Caribbean Export has invested a significant proportion of its work programme to interventions that support the development and growth of this sector. Through 2021, the Agency continued with the implementation of virtual capacity building programmes for service providers from industries such as business and professional services, tourism, health & wellness, recreation, culture and sport, animation, energy and ICT with the hosting of its Services Go Global, Business of Music programmes and promotion of the Services Registry which now lists 150 service providers across the Caribbean.

SERVICES REGISTRY
Online database of service
providers in the Caribbean



150
BUSINESSES



15
COUNTRIES



8
SECTORS

SERVICES GO GLOBAL

The Services Go Global (SGG) programme offers both in-person training and e-learning to help service providers become export-ready, increase their competitiveness and expand their exports by capitalizing on opportunities under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and other trade agreements. The course provides four key modules over a period of four days. Participants also complete or upgrade an export plan for their business.

PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS

CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

DEVELOPING A MARKETING STRATEGY

ENTERING THE MARKET

“The services go global training allowed my company to focus on the value proposition and markets thus having more meaningful and tailored dialog with clients about our services offers” Jason Lindsay
- Managing Director, Full Circle Animation (Trinidad and Tobago)

During 2021, seven (7) SGG virtual training sessions were hosted which enabled over 100 service providers to participate and complete export plans and 145 to become certified. In collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI), the Agency launched the inaugural Annual Caribbean Lawrence Placide Services Go Global Award in August 2021, which saw Farah Guerrero from the Salient Group, Belize and Alvin Morton of Servus Ltd, Trinidad and Tobago, take the award.

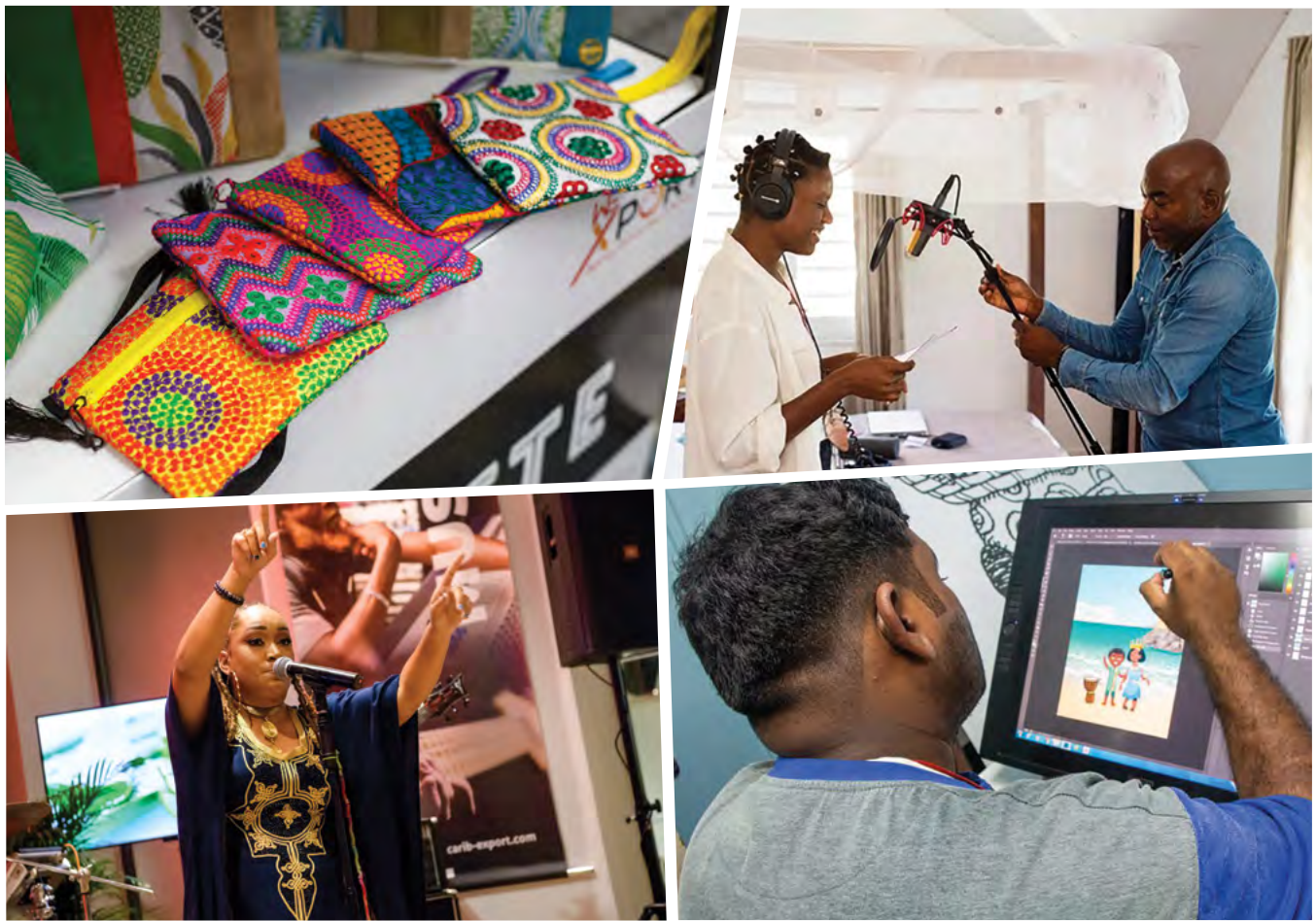
The winners will receive coaching services funded by Caribbean Export and the European Union, including one-on-one sessions with a certified trainer, towards the completion and implementation of their export plan.

Facilitating Business to Business

Whilst the training and capacity building assists firms to improve their competitiveness, facilitating business-to-business meetings supports them further to achieve success in the global export marketplace.

Between October – November 2021, Caribbean Export partnered to host ALES (Latin American Association of Services Exporters) which included the ALES Talks weekly webinar series, a virtual expo/showcase and business to business (B2B) meeting as part of the ALES Convention on November 10-11, 2021. Thirty-five regional services providers participated in the virtual expo and B2B meetings with 48 international buyers in the areas of Business and Professional Services, Animation, ICT and Green Technology services from Africa, the EU, Latin America and North America.

The event contributes towards the further advancement of the relationship and trade between Latin America and the Caribbean. Through the B2Bs Caribbean and Latin American businesses were able to explore opportunities for partnerships and collaboration and led to Etalon Global Solution (Jamaica) and Strategy Up (Canada) partnering to develop the first Caribbean Business Game simulation, to be held in February 2022. The simulation provides the ability to illustrate theoretical business; improves knowledge retention, decision making and teamwork skills; increases student engagement and enjoyment; allows users to run all of their simulation-based courses online in any format; and provides a powerful tool to test hands-on skills and strategic thinking.

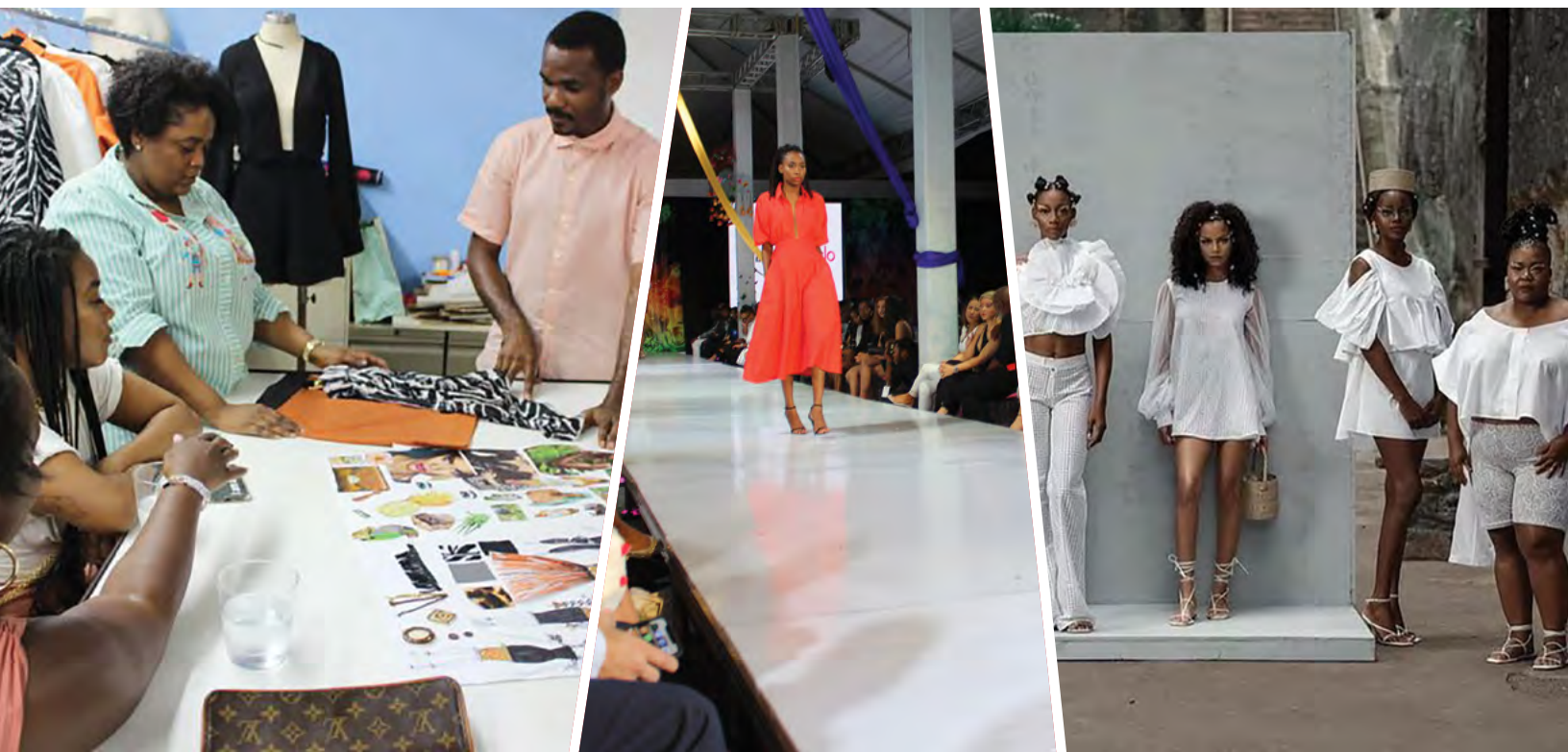


GROWING THE ORANGE ECONOMY

Caribbean Export launched the Business of Music (BOM) programme in 2016 in collaboration with the Caribbean Network of Services Coalitions (CNSC) to capitalise on the digital revolution by supporting the development of the Caribbean's music industry with a focus on building the capacity of music managers and artists specifically in the areas of business. Whilst the Agency had reasonable interest in the course initially, the onset of the pandemic contributed to lockdown measures which forced regional practitioners to re-visit their revenue streams in the light of live performances, their main source of income being abruptly halted.

The BOM has evolved into a hybrid online and in person programme that addresses the use of digital platforms, intellectual property (IP), music distribution and promotion. It aims to strengthen the competitiveness of regional managers and artistes to operate more effectively within the international music industry. The training helps cultivate the necessary skillset and strategy needed for export planning.

In 2021, Caribbean Export conducted BOM training in Trinidad and Tobago and Belize with over 60 industry practitioners. From the Belize session participants were supported in the creation of music and video production for increased exports. Further, Caribbean Export facilitated its 2nd Caribbean Rhythm Showcase which enabled 40 interested music buyers, distributors, promoters, from across North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean to scout the participating practitioners. During the period from the first airing of the Showcase, nine producers/buyers have contacted nine artists.



CARIBBEAN FASHION SECTOR

The global fashion sector reached a value of nearly US\$758.4 billion in 2018, having grown at a compound annual growth rate of 7.5% since 2014, and is expected to grow at a rate of 11.8% to nearly US\$1,182.9 billion by 2022². Caribbean Export has undertaken several interventions to support the development of the fashion industry in CARIFORUM States, including fashion accelerators, fashion shows and training.

Recognising that both buyers and consumers need to discover new designers online and ensure that regional designers have an online presence Caribbean Export launched the Caribbean Fashion Showroom on Instagram and Facebook featuring designers from across CARIFORUM.



115

designers features



+380

**posts on social
media**



+6,560

followers



+1.14M

impressions

²<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20191025005178/en/Global-1182.9-Billion-Clothing-and-Apparel-Market-Analysis-Opportunities-and-Strategies-to-2022---ResearchAndMarkets.com#:~:text=The%20global%20clothing%20and%20apparel,global%20clothing%20and%20apparel%20market.>

In May 2021 the Agency hosted a virtual pop-up shop on the Caribbean Fashion Showroom Instagram page. Nine leading fashion designers from CARIFORUM countries presented their collections to visitors.

Caribbean Export also supported the Port of Spain Fashion Week in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2021, which had a regional component and led to the production of 25 “Look Books” to assist the marketing and promotion of participating designers. In addition, the Agency supported three quick guides for MSMEs in the fashion industry covering topics including: the business plan; pivoting to thrive through the pandemic; marketing tips and tricks for MSMEs; and access to financing and grant opportunities.



Chacabana Fashion

The Chacabana is an iconic piece of clothing that is associated with Latin American and Caribbean people. The distinctive traditional apparel piece has been reinvented by a new generation of tailors and dressmakers in the Caribbean. Caribbean Export in collaboration with the TradeCom II Programme supported the development of industry through providing assistance to the Dominican Association of Chacabanas Manufacturers (ACHADOM) financed by the ACP-EU project REG/FED/24728. The project aimed to enhance the industry's competitiveness through the digitalisation of ACHADOM with the development of a commercial platform. As part of the project an assessment was made of the potential of the digital economy available for the exporting sector and how its development could impact growth and create employment in the Dominican Republic. Further, a three-year marketing and commercial strategy was developed for ACHADOM that focused on the adoption of a strong collective brand 'Chacabanas Dominicanas'; strategic alliances with public and private institutions for the inclusion of the garment as 'Marca País' (country brand); and the use of different promotional channels for niche markets.

Central to the project was the development of an e-commerce platform that enables export-ready members of ACHADOM to reach a wider global audience. The platform was launched on September 16, 2021 and includes 4 chacabana designers from the Dominican Republic.



TRADE COOPERATION

Caribbean Export believes a stronger, united region that works together to reach its mutual goal of development, can be achieved with enhanced trade facilitation. Since May 2018 the Agency was commissioned by the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and the European Union to implement the Trade and Private Sector Component of the Haiti-Dominican Republic Binational Cooperation Programme, under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).

Trade between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was estimated to be approximately US\$820million in 2019. Further the disparities between quality and conformity standards have led to in-efficiencies and the duplication of efforts and increased spending by private sector firms wishing to export and import products between the two countries.

The Binational programme aims to strengthen economic and trade cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic in a sustainable manner by supporting initiatives that can reduce current imbalances in the long term and reduce poverty levels.

To actualise this, several initiatives have been developed in cooperation with the respective Government ministries to support the formalization of trade and to harmonise the quality of products between the two countries. In March 2021, Caribbean Export facilitated the development of a trade protocol to strengthen the exchange of information between customs at the border and implemented a communications platform that would enable the Bureau Haïtien de Normalisation (BHN) and the Instituto Dominicano para la Calidad (INDOCAL) to collaborate seamlessly.



Programa
de Cooperación Binacional
República Dominicana
República de Haití



Programme
de Coopération Binationale
République d'Haïti
République Dominicaine



Haiti-DR Bi-National Value Chains Project

Caribbean Export is working to strengthen economic and commercial cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic sustainably by implementing initiatives that reduce the current historical imbalances of trade. It is envisaged that participation in global and regional value chains will contribute towards this end as well as the alleviation of poverty.

With a focus on three key sectors: the cocoa/chocolate sector; essential oils and cosmetics; and handicraft jewellery and fashion accessories, value chain strategies have been developed and are being implemented. These strategies enhance the quality of goods produced in the two countries as well as their competitiveness to maximise exports. These activities fall in to three main categories: Capacity building; financial/technical assistance and export promotion/trade missions.



Companies from each sector participate in the range of interventions designed to build their capacity and support their increased participation in their respective value chain.

Cocoa/chocolate Value Chain	Handicraft/Fashion/Jewellery/Accessories	Essential Oils
Ayitika SA (HT)	Asociacio De Artesanos De Las Chacabanas	Kapril Industrial Laboratorios SRL
Recursos Globales, SRL	Choublac/Caribbean Island Apparel	Laboratorio Capilo Español SRL
Conacado Agroindustrial	Tisaksul	Laboratorios MK SRL
Fabrica De Chocolate Artesanal Chokolala SRL	Cristina Nunez, Artesanias	Producciones PSEI
Federation Des Cooperatives Cacaoyeres Du Nord (FECCANO)	Tipik Creations	Angel Touch
Geo Wiener SA	Caribbean Craft	Caribbean Flavours and Fragrances (CFF)
Makaya Chocolat	Fatima Polanco 3 Estilos	ECOBIO
Organisation Pour Le Developpement De La Filiere Cacao De La Grand Anse (ODEFCAG)	Asociacion De Artesanos Ciudad Corazon	Savons des Iles
Proagro Dominicana EIRL		
Xocolat (DR)		



HANDICRAFT/FASHION/JEWELLERY/ ACCESSORIES VALUE CHAIN

Haiti and the Dominican Republic have a rich cultural and artistic heritage that is characterized by their diversity and a unique mixture of Caribbean, African and European influences. This cultural and artistic heritage is often displayed in the unique, creative products made by artisans across both countries.

The handicraft sector is a significant part of the global economy with the global handicraft market reaching US\$526.5 billion in 2017 (Research and Markets-2018) and is estimated to surpass US\$1 trillion by 2024 .

The cultural and creative industries in the Dominican Republic and Haiti have the potential to boost their respective economies and serve as a lever for development and to support growth. In view of this, Caribbean Export conducted a study in 2019 and is currently implementing its recommendations as part of the handicraft, fashion, jewellery and accessories binational value chain.

Caribbean Export facilitated the signing of an MOU between National Center of Crafts (CENADARTE) of the Dominican Republic and the National School of Arts (ENARTS) in Haiti to lay the foundation of a symbiotic relationship between the two countries in March 2021 and opened a Digital Design Centre to enable the implementation of digital design training. To date training has been carried out in digital jewellery design, e-commerce and intellectual property.

Additionally, virtual trade missions to the Dominican Republic (DR) by Haitian businesses enabled exploratory businesses to business meetings to uncover opportunities for collaboration between Haitian and DR creatives.

There are eight companies participating in the handicraft, fashion, jewellery and accessories value chain binational programme who are also receiving technical assistance following the development of action plans that identified their business needs.



ESSENTIAL OILS AND NATURAL COSMETICS VALUE CHAIN

Haiti has a long history in the production of essential oils dating back to the 1930's with as many as 50 distilleries scattered across the country producing neroli, lime, basilica, lemon, vetiver and amyris oils amongst others for export. As a result of fluctuating prices on the world market and international policies the number of distilleries which concentrated in the production of vetiver oil in the Les Cayes region, was reduced to between 14-17 by the 2000's.

Over the last 15 years a small number of micro and small enterprises, mostly women owned, have invested in natural cosmetics production and aromatherapy products using local and imported essential oils and other vegetable oils. Vetiver accounts for the majority of Haiti's essential oils production and exports; and is the only essential oil with a significant impact on the economy. It is the major source of employment in the southern peninsula providing a viable livelihood for more than 60,000 smallholder farmers growing and harvesting vetiver roots. In addition, several hundred workers are engaged in preparing, processing roots in collecting stations and distilleries and transportation to exporters. Essential oils extracted from vetiver and amyris are Haiti's most valuable agriculture export accounting for \$21,1 million dollars in 2015. Haiti exports 130 MT of vetiver essential oils annually about 50% of the world's supply and the cosmetic industry is also a growing sector in the Dominican Republic with exports of cosmetics increasing by 30% between 2013-2017.

Since 2019, there has been a revival in Haiti's production industry for essential oils. In addition to vetiver and amyris, there has also been a revival of castor oil, citrus-based oils and ylang-ylang oil production in response to growing interest from developed markets for natural products.

Apart from the production of essential oils which is more concentrated in Haiti, in the field of cosmetics and beauty products, there has been a specialization in hair care products in the Dominican Republic and a shift towards body care and spa products has been witnessed in Haiti. In view of these trends and the market opportunity for growth and export, Caribbean Export has focused on the development of the essential oil and natural cosmetics value chain.

During the period Jan-Dec 2021, a technical working group was convened to explore opportunities to create joint products and increase cooperation between Haitian and Dominican companies operating in the sector. As a result, Caribbean Export will facilitate participation of businesses at international cosmetics fairs in Europe, support the improvement of product brands, capacity building and training, as well as the creation of common communication tools that improve visibility.



COCOA/CHOCOLATE VALUE CHAIN

The global cocoa market was valued at USD 8.6 billion in 2012, with five-year projections showing a 7.3% surge in market growth to approximately USD 13.32 billion³. The Dominican Republic is the ninth world producer of cocoa, but the largest exporter of organic cocoa with 60% of the world market. It has 40,000 cocoa producers and exports 250 million tons per year impacting 300,000 people. Sixteen percent of cocoa production in the Dominican Republic is organic⁴, and is interlinked in a value chain with ecological tourism, agritourism and cultural tourism. With a range of guided visits to organic cocoa plantations and the overall industry size, cocoa production is a valuable industry to the Dominican economy.

In Haiti, cocoa growers are also organized into cooperative associations. In the North, there is a prominent federation of 7 cocoa cooperatives, *Fédération de Coopératives de Cacaoyères du Nord (FECCANO)* comprising 3485 members and a new growing association of producers, *Union des Producteurs de Cacao du Nord (UPCAN)* comprising 233 groups of 10-25 members totalizing 3547 producers. FECCANO export directly fermented organic cocoa mostly to Europe and is also participating in the cocoa value chain project.

To increase efficiency and boost production six firms are receiving financial and technical assistance. For example, assistance to purchase equipment to process cocoa powder; participation in international trade fairs facilitated by Caribbean Export; virtual training on quality management systems and the introduction of agricultural technology (AgTech) with the purchase of GPS devices to locate and map cocoa farms in the Dominican Republic.

³Grand View Research 2021 found that increasing usage of cocoa butter as functional ingredient in the formulation of chocolates is also expected to be one of the key factors augmenting market growth.

⁴http://www.dominicanaonline.org/portail/espanol/cpo_cacao.asp

CHOCOLALA: CREATING JOBS FROM COCOA BALLS

In the community of Las Lajas, in the Dominican Republic, five women, at the time belonging to the now defunct Ana Idalia Navarro Mothers' Club, agreed to seek ways of generating income without having to be employed. Silvia García, Benita Canela, Milagros Marte, France Altagracia Capellán and Ana Cecilia García, decided in 1990 to sell handcrafted chocolate balls door to door. Fast forward to 2021 their business Chocolala is participating in the Caribbean Export Binational Cocoa/Chocolate Value Chains Project and recently received a vertical powder packing machine as part of the financial assistance under the project. The company also received technical assistance to achieve public health regulations and seven different certifications for the Dominican Republic allowing national distribution of their products in supermarkets

Their improved efficiency in the packing process and measurements combined with technical assistance in business processes such as exports recording has ultimately improved their competitiveness. It has also enabled them to respond to the growing demand for their products from the retail sector. With two new supermarkets and a boost in retail sales, Chocolala has hired five more permanent employees taking them to 20 employees (16 women and 4 men).

"Before Chocolala, the only option we had was to work in family homes, doing domestic work in Santiago and Puerto Plata, away from our children. Now we work here, we take money home without being away," says Nelfi García, the general manager.

The initiative of those five women who dreamed of a livelihood within their community 30 years ago is now a consolidated company that has drawn more than an exclamation of surprise from the unbelievers who only saw illusions during the years of hard work. These aspirations today are the building blocks in which an average of 24 quintals (2.4 tons) of cocoa are processed weekly to produce products, the raw material being brought from community producers. Previously, they did not exceed more than two quintals per week.

The women of Chocolala responded with creativity and with the right attitude to the lack of opportunities in a rural community. Now, with the support and technical consultancy of Caribbean Export and allies such as the European Union, Chocolala has a firm eye on the export trade and tourism with their Ecological Trail, a space where visitors encounter the cocoa plantations and the natural attractions of the area. This undertaking has also created new sources of work.



INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Caribbean Export recognizes that investment promotion is critical for the development of new export goods and services; and the economic transformation of our region. Investment promotion is a central pillar for the Agency, which serves as the Secretariat for 23 member countries of the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA).

The investment priority focus areas include:

1. promoting the Caribbean and its territories as investment destinations
2. facilitating investment through the establishment of transparent and easily accessible information systems
3. building the capacity of the investment promotion agencies (IPAs) in the Caribbean.

Priority sectors for foreign direct investment agreed with CAIPA are:

- Renewable Energy
- Agricultural Technology (AgTech)
- Business Process Outsourcing
- Hotel and Resort Development

“Reliable supply chains and access to export markets cannot be taken for granted and must be actively created and sustained. By refocusing on emerging sectors, we are now ready to compete on a global scale.”

- Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Trade and Industry.





CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF
INVESTMENT PROMOTION
AGENCIES

PROMOTING THE CARIBBEAN AS AN INVESTMENT DESTINATION

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to take a toll on investor confidence, increasing competition for foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and by extension the need for continued promotion of the Caribbean as a destination of choice for investment capital. Given the restrictions on travel and face to face meetings, Caribbean Export focused attention on increasing the visibility of the region online, through the hosting of a series of virtual investment forums, and the development and piloting of a digital communications campaign to attract FDI.

Investment Forums

At the national level, the Agency sought to support the work of the IPAs, providing support in promoting investment opportunities and joining forces in attracting potential investors to participate in online webinars and investment forums. In 2021, the first virtual forum was held on January 21, and focused attention on the untapped investment and trade opportunities in Aruba. Caribbean Export partnered with ARINA, to attract more than 200 delegates to this event. On March 23, the Guyana Virtual Investment Forum was held in collaboration with GO-INVEST, promoting Guyana as the fastest growing economy in 2020, with growth of more than 40% of GDP. The event attracted over 900 registrants from more than 20 countries. In November, The Agency partnered with invesTT to host the first ever virtual Trinidad & Tobago Investment Forum, with more than 750 registrants from over 60 countries.

4x
Investment
Forums

+2150
Delegates

At the regional level, the Agency collaborated with CAIPA, the Caribbean Agribusiness Association (CABA) and COLEACP, to host the first Caribbean AgTech Investment Forum on 5-7 October which welcomed over 500 delegates over the 3 days.

Investment Promotion

Given the importance of an online presence to investment promotion during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency sought to develop a digital communications strategy and pilot campaign focused on attracting FDI into the Caribbean. The strategy focused attention on the priority sectors of CAIPA members, namely, AgTech, Outsourcing and Renewable Energy and recommended the redevelopment of the CAIPA website, which was undertaken. The pilot implementation of the Strategy was executed in October – December 2021 and saw visits to the CAIPA website increasing to more than 27,000, relative to the less than 1,000 visits to the previous website in a year. The increased visibility as a direct result of online promotion via the CAIPA website led to the preparation of a proposal by the Agency to the InterAmerican Development Bank for grant funding to continue the online promotion of the region as an investment destination. US\$610,000 was approved for this collaborative initiative with CAIPA.

ITEL – CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION

In 2019, itel was named Caribbean BPO of the Year at Caribbean Export's Outsource to the Caribbean Conference (OCC2019). itel, a Caribbean based business process outsourcing (BPO) won the award due to their focus on quality, reliability, integrity and family. The company's CEO, Yoni Epstein, participated in the OCC2019 held in Curacao where over 150 delegates convened to explore investment opportunities in the Caribbean outsourcing sector. At the event participants were able to meet with Caribbean investment promotion agencies (IPAs) to understand more about what was available to them and it was here that Epstein was able to forge a relationship with Invest Saint Lucia. In 2020, itel expanded into Saint Lucia creating more than 450 jobs initially, and in 2021 a further 300 jobs were created. Also in 2021, the company expanded into Guyana through a merger and acquisition of the firm EMERGE BPO, resulting in 850 new jobs.

"Without a doubt, the OCC event provided an opportunity to speak directly with the IPAs and secure information needed to make sound business decisions," notes Yoni Epstein, CEO of itel.

"The work we do in collaboration with Caribbean Export in investment promotion takes at least 18 – 24 months to bear fruit. Itel is one of the companies we are proud to partner with as its expansion has resulted in more than 1,500 jobs being created across the Caribbean, mainly for Caribbean women" notes Annette Mark the President of CAIPA and Executive Director of InvestSVG.

itel (formerly itelBPO) is an international, award-winning customer experience partner, with operations across the Caribbean, Latin America, U.S., and Canada.



INNOVATION
DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN A LEADER AND A FOLLOWER





DEVELOPING INVESTMENT FACILITATION SYSTEMS

The facilitation of investment will be critical to the region's post-pandemic recovery. Increasing the ease with which investors are able to access up to date and reliable information on topics such as business-related legislation, infrastructure, costs and taxes. Through a partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade Development (UNCTAD), Caribbean Export continued the build-out of iGuides, or online investment Guides for Caribbean Territories. iGuides for Guyana and the Dominican Republic were developed, adding to the iGuides already developed for Antigua & Barbuda, Jamaica, Curacao, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and St. Kitts and Nevis.

Other materials developed by the Agency to facilitate investors includes the AgTech Investment Catalogue, with more than 80 AgTech projects from 16 Caribbean countries compiled. The catalogue was promoted on the CAIPA website and saw more than 300 visits in a 3-month period.

The Agency also sought to facilitate equity investment into large projects and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with the development and launch of the Caribbean Project Preparation and Investment Platform (CPPIP). The pilot CPPIP seeks to prepare and package investment opportunities targeting investors that have previously been excluded, namely investors who invest smaller amounts (e.g. the diaspora), as well as family offices, institutional investors such as hedge funds and pension funds. During the first call for projects, 20 SMEs submitted expressions of interest, of which four were shortlisted for further due diligence, packaging and promotion to equity investors. The second call for regional projects will be launched in 2022. Finally, the Agency sought to increase awareness within the region of the obstacles to investment and present recommendations that could be implemented at the regional as well as the national levels to improve the status quo. Focus was placed on the credit infrastructure in the region, in particular, the credit reporting systems and the secured transactions systems. The Agency also increased awareness of the challenges faced in the region in resolving insolvency issues which has become primordial given the high level of bankruptcies due to the adverse impact of the pandemic on business operations. Through a collaboration with the ACP Investment Climate Reform Facility, region-wide studies and webinars were undertaken to engage stakeholders with a view to implementing recommendations to improve the business facilitation systems in the region.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR IPAS

For many investors in the region, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant disruptions, with some investors choosing to delay expansion projects, while others have decided to relocate to more favourable destinations. Given the need to retain existing investors, the Agency sought to focus attention on Aftercare in Investment Promotion, equipping CAIPA members with the tools needed to support investors during these difficult times. More than 60 CAIPA members were trained in aftercare over a 2-day period with the majority indicating the relevance of the training at this time. The Agency also sought to build the capacity of CAIPA members in the best practices in social media promotion, ensuring that the lessons learnt in the development of the digital communication strategy development were transferred to CAIPA members.

LEADERSHIP TEAM



Deodat Maharaj
Executive Director

dmaharaj@carib-export.com



Leo Naut
Deputy Executive Director

lnaut@carib-export.com



Lisa Rodriguez
Manager, Operations

lrodriguez@carib-export.com



Allyson Francis
Services Specialist

afancis@carib-export.com



Damie Sinanan
Manager - Competitiveness
and Export Promotion

dsinanan@carib-export.com



Contact Us

www.carib-export.com

info@carib-export.com

Head Office

1st Floor Baobab Tower
Warrens, St. Michael
Barbados
Tel: +1 (246) 436-0578

Sub Regional Office

Av. Pedro Henriquez Urena No. 150
Torre Diandy XIX , Piso 7
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Tel: +1 (809) 531-2259

Haiti-Dr Bi-National Programme Office

4TH Floor, 151 Angle Ave., Jean Paul II &
Impasse Duverger, Port-au-Prince, HAITI
Tel: +1 (509) 48 92 53 55



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Caribbean Export Development Agency and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.