

JOYEUX 50 ANS ! HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY!

COLEACP 1973-2023 COLEAD



COLEAD

20
23

ANNUAL REPORT

COMMITTEE LINKING
ENTREPRENEURSHIP - AGRICULTURE - DEVELOPMENT

TO FACILITATE
AND IMPLEMENT ALL ACTIONS ALLOWING,
DIRECTLY AND/OR INDIRECTLY, TO INCREASE THE
**CONTRIBUTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL
SECTOR, AND HORTICULTURE IN PARTICULAR,**
IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE UNITED NATIONS (UN)
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND THE GENERAL DELEGATE

In a global political and economic context that continues to appear threatening (structural pressures relating to climate change and biodiversity loss, wars in Ukraine and the Middle East), it is clear that the stakeholders in COLEAD's field of action remain determined and willing to think and work together to contribute to the necessary transformation of agri-food systems. This was evident at our last Consultative Committee (CC) meeting on 1 December 2023. We must remain mobilised and focused regarding our *raison d'être*, which is to help remove the barriers to sustainable development in agriculture - a key sector for achieving the urgent Sustainable Development Goals.

We all know that the agri-food sector is key for the planet, and even more so for many developing countries. It supports economic growth, reduces poverty in the most vulnerable communities, especially for women and young people, helps to strengthen food



security and improve nutrition, and is an essential parameter in the fight against climate change and, more generally, for the protection of our planet. For this reason, COLEAD and its partners support the agri-food sector in EU partner countries with a view to improving overall social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The challenges and needs of partner countries demand ambition and innovation. This will enable us to meet the challenges, seize market opportunities at local, regional and international levels, and ensure that young people and women benefit from higher value-added projects.

One year on from a name change that embodied COLEAD's ongoing evolution, each of the contributions to CC 2023 will also have helped to highlight common concerns and solutions to the challenges identified and shared on that occasion, as well as to express specific priorities or even urgencies. On the one hand, this confirmed - if confirmation were required - the need for COLEAD to continue its historic activities. On the other hand, it also allowed us to reflect in depth on the organisation's priority areas for action (regulation, climate change, access to finance, advocacy).

The directors and members of COLEAD therefore recommend that the organisation continues to fulfil its mission, which is based on a multifaceted role, in particular in the following areas: vocational training and specialised technical assistance linked to the achievement of the SDGs; advocacy to defend the specific situation of producers in EU partner countries, particularly in the face of the consequences of climate change; liaison with the public sector and relevant authorities to facilitate communication; access to finance adapted to the agricultural sector; and a contribution to the creation of a better future for young people.

For their part, the partners (INTPA, OACPS, AFD, ENABEL, STDF) recommend that COLEAD (i) continue its role as a technical assistant in the agricultural sector in favour of trade and sustainable production, as well as its role as a network actor necessary for good communication between private and public actors at all levels of the value chains, and (ii) communicate more, especially in 2024, its "success stories" in terms of sustainable agricultural production and trade. More specifically, partners have also asked for (iii) more links and liaison with other development programmes and practitioners, in particular to provide inspiration in terms of its good

practices, (iv) to play a greater role in making the projects of (small) entrepreneurs in target countries more "bankable", and (v) to systematically and increasingly integrate the priority themes of climate/biodiversity and gender into its approach.

However, everyone also agrees that COLEAD "cannot do everything".

For this reason, the idea has emerged to increasingly prioritise COLEAD's actions. This would allow greater account to be taken of the political environment of the countries and regions targeted, as well as the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of value chains. This prioritisation could also take into account the sensitive issues that emerged from the discussions: (i) the support needed

for the gradual integration of the accelerated changes in market access conditions (in particular in the EU) into the agricultural practices of economic operators; (ii) defending the voice of the most vulnerable countries and operators that have not contributed to the weakening of the global ecosystem; and (iii) facilitating access to finance for small and medium-sized agri-food enterprises in EU partner countries.

This horizon requires that we continue to look in the same direction and that COLEAD acts accordingly, i.e:

- **Continues to perform** in the implementation of its activities;
- **Joins forces by acting in networks** and with all actors in order to have the means to achieve its ambition/holistic approach;

- **Inspires**, i.e. strives to highlight successes and good practices and turn them into sources of inspiration that can trigger a more global transformation in support of the SDGs.

Today's food systems are both the first victims of climate change and responsible for almost a third of global greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, they are sources of local and international solutions for sustainable development. COLEAD and its partners will therefore remain mobilised and committed to their contribution to the overall improvement of social, economic and environmental sustainability. We will also continue to ensure that farmers and vulnerable people in developing countries, who are already bearing the brunt of climate change even though they are least responsible for it, are defended on



an equal footing with all efforts to improve their production and trade practices.

In this new Annual Report you will find many concrete examples of what we are doing on the ground: the list is long, but there is still much to be done.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to the work and commitment of all those in and with COLEAD who, every day, enable us to fulfil our shared mission of building a more sustainable and just future. **As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of COLEACP and the first year of COLEAD**, we pledge to intensify our efforts to do more, better and faster. We also reiterate our call to action for all of us, because only together will we succeed. We hope you enjoy reading this report.



[COLEAD.link](https://www.colead.link)



"GROWING PEOPLE"

OUR VISION

Because we believe that changes in the global agri-food model will require new generations of actors. This is especially the case in sub-Saharan Africa. Where the opportunities are as big as the challenges. And where sustainable agriculture is a driving force for a sustainable future.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY	2 ZERO HUNGER	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	5 GENDER EQUALITY	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION	14 LIFE BELOW WATER	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	

THE WORLD IN 2023 IN VIEW OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS - HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, global temperatures were the highest they had been in 125,000 years, on the verge of exceeding the 2 degree Celsius limit set by the 2015 Paris Agreement. Global warming and its consequences are no longer a future threat, but a present reality.

Other major global realities during the year included the explosion of artificial intelligence, the rise of nationalism, political and military pressure from Russia in Europe and Africa, local wars (Ukraine, Israel-Palestine) with global repercussions and global declarations (UN, EU, AU, etc.) in favour of the planet with local repercussions. These are all sources of concern, complexity and even incomprehension.

JANUARY

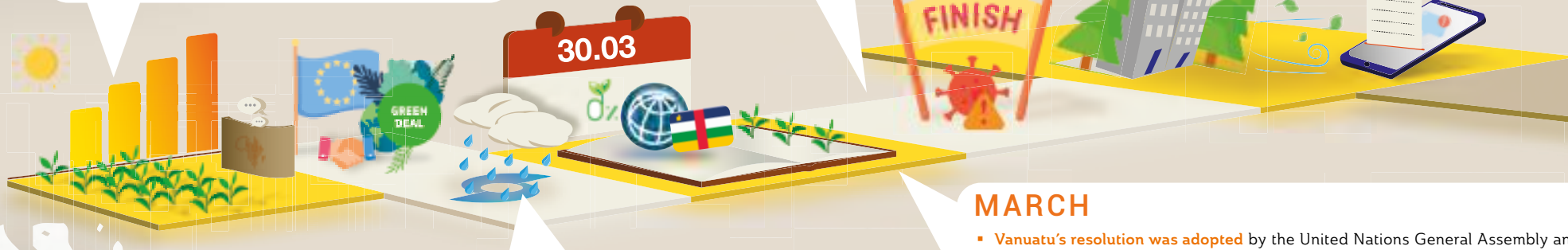
- **Dakar Summit 2:** The United Nations declared that Africa must be the focus of attention as "the number of undernourished people in Africa is growing faster than anywhere else in the world". Sustainable Development Goal 2 on eradicating hunger can only be achieved if it is accomplished in Africa.
- **January was the warmest on record in Europe** and the wettest in New Zealand.
- Microsoft announced that it is investing more than \$10 billion in the start-up Open Ai.
- The good scientific news is that the hole in the ozone layer is expected to disappear by 2066 at the latest.

APRIL

- **Record heat in Asia.** Especially in Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Laos.
- The WHO declared the end of the global emergency associated with the COVID pandemic.
- 'CARICOM AT FIFTY' SYMPOSIUM. A new agri-food strategy was implemented in the Caribbean.

MAY

- **Typhoon Mawar** hit the Philippines, Japan and Taiwan with winds of up to 289 km/h. Damage to the islands, including roads and buildings.
- **African Economic Outlook 2023** - The African Development Bank's publication came at a time when African countries were facing multiple shocks, including COVID 19, which led to a decline in the continent's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate from 4.8% in 2021 to 3.8% in 2022. Nevertheless, **African economies remain resilient.**



FEBRUARY

- **The European Commission launched the Green Deal industrial plan** to accelerate the transition to climate neutrality.
- Devastating earthquake kills 59,000 in Turkey and 8,000 in Syria
- **Record heat in Chile.** Forest fires. 270,000 hectares burned.
- Cyclone Freddy hit Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. 500,000 people displaced.
- Chat GPT passed the **100 million user mark.**
- Russia and Ukraine have been at war for one year.

MARCH

- **Vanuatu's resolution was adopted** by the United Nations General Assembly and hailed as a victory for **climate justice.**
- World Bank report stated that the Central African Republic can lift millions out of poverty by revitalising its agricultural sector. Around 75% of Central Africans, particularly women, depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, mainly through informal employment.
- The ILO, the African Union (AU), the Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD) (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) finalised a joint initiative to fill the data gap on agricultural labour.
- 30 March 2024 - **1st International Zero Waste Day.**

JUNE

- **World Environment Day.** Highlighting the plastic pollution crisis (along with climate change) and possible solutions.
- OACPS MSME Day: **Women entrepreneurs, a driving force for sustainable economic and social development** in OACPS countries.
- **AU and EU Ministers of Agriculture,** meeting for the fifth time, committed to **accelerate the transformation of food systems** for sustainable development.

JULY

- At the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government Summit in Trinidad and Tobago, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for **financial and climate justice**.
- Eurobarometer: 90% of Europeans consider climate change a very serious problem.
- Coup d'état in Niger.
- UNICEF report: between 2000 and 2022, 2.1 billion people will have access to drinking water, but 1 in 4 people in the world still do not have access to drinking water.
- **2nd Russia-Africa Summit** in St Petersburg, attended by 17 African heads of state.
- **Extreme heat in Europe** and the USA. Severe fires in Sardinia and Rhodes.

SEPTEMBER

- Devastating floods in Libya.
- **1st African Climate Summit.** The Nairobi Declaration was adopted as the basis for Africa's common position in the global climate change process up to COP 28 and beyond.
- Denmark launches the "first green container ship". "This ship, this moment, embodies Europe's decision to take the lead in the fight against climate change," said Mrs von der Leyen.
- **G20 organised by India.** 43 heads of government attend under the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future".
- **2023 MDG Summit in New York.** Of the 140 or so goals for which data are available, 15% are on track, 48% are moderately or seriously off track and 37% have made no progress or regressed compared to 2015.

AUGUST

- **Fires** in Hawaii. 17,000 hectares burned.
- BRICS Summit: India consolidated its geopolitical leadership on the international stage.
- African Union: the AU reiterated its deep concern at the resurgence of military coups on the continent and its unequivocal condemnation of the coup in Niger.
- Publication of a new IMF study on the eve of the 1st African Climate Summit, which shows that **climate change does indeed have more lasting macroeconomic costs in fragile countries**.



This world in perpetual motion is experiencing and responding to economic, political, social and environmental crises. Against this backdrop, the Sustainable Development Goals are becoming increasingly important, and we must act together to support them, especially through innovation and constant commitment. More and more solutions to these challenges are emerging. This is what COLEAD strives to think and do when carrying out its mission in the agricultural sector, especially in the most vulnerable countries.

OCTOBER

- **Global Gateway Forum:** The EU and the African Development Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding with global partners to mobilise funding for the development of this corridor.
- Haiti - The UN mandates a Kenyan-led multinational security support mission to help the Haitian police fight gangs.
- Hamas launched a violent attack on Israel on 7 October.
- **Nestlé, Danone and other food multinationals committed to framework for regenerative agriculture.** A group of more than 170 companies rallied around a definition of the term to encourage action at farm level.
- **More women in parliaments.** Globally, 27% of politicians in national parliaments will be women by 2023. In 1997, the figure was just 12%.

NOVEMBER

- **Kenyans benefitted from a tree planting holiday.** Target: 100 million seedlings.
- EU agreed to ban export of plastic waste to poor countries.
- **China's carbon emissions** to fall for first time from 2024.
- For the first time, a commercial aircraft crossed the Atlantic Ocean without using fossil fuels.
- On 15 November, **the post-Cotonou agreement** became the Samoa agreement, which provides the general framework for the EU's relations with ACP countries.

DECEMBER

- **Global temperatures in 2023 were the highest** in 125,000 years (source: Copernicus)
- **Historic declaration at COP 28:** negotiators from nearly 200 countries agreed to step up climate action before the end of the decade, with the main aim of keeping the global temperature limit at 1.5°C while rapidly increasing renewable energy production. **Agriculture and food systems were the subject** of a specific declaration identifying them as key sectors for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- **Joint statement by the OACPS and the EU** at COP 28 reaffirming their commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement.



2023 COLEAD AND ITS PROGRAMMES TIMELINE

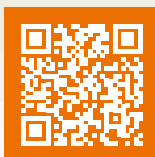
In an international environment that remains highly complex and volatile, COLEAD, through its programmes, strives to fulfil its mission as effectively as possible, which is to facilitate and implement all actions that directly or indirectly increase the contribution of the agricultural and horticultural sectors in particular to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Below are some news items that are representative and illustrative of the activities carried out during 2023.

2023

JANUARY

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF AGRINFO in Brussels, a new European Union programme aimed at informing EU partner countries about the latest legislative and policy developments in the agricultural sector. 119 participants, including representatives of embassies from 45 countries, European Commission services and agri-food associations.

COLEACP OFFICIALLY BECOMES COLEAD: COmittee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development.



FEBRUARY

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS - Participation in Fruit Logistica in Berlin and Biofach 2023 in Nuremberg - Meetings with international fruit and vegetable market players and partners benefiting from the FFM+, AGRINFO and NEXt Kenya programmes.

GHANA - ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN EU ORGANIC FARMING REGULATIONS through the FFM SPS programme. Example of HPW FRESH & DRY adapting to the new EU Organic Regulation 2018/848.

MARCH

THE ACP COME TOGETHER IN ROME TO ADDRESS PLANT HEALTH CHALLENGES. 17th session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CMP) at FAO headquarters in Rome (NPPO-COLEAD exchange through its FFM+ and AGRINFO programmes).

STDF GUINEA PROJECT - Steering Committee of the project "Strengthening the phytosanitary control and certification system in Guinea" (STDF/PG/498).

DESIRA LIFT PROJECT: Launch of the study on the financing of innovation. Definition of the scope. Based on a review of mechanisms for financing agricultural innovation in Africa.

APRIL

SEAFOOD 2023: The AGRINFO programme takes part in Seafood Expo Global/Seafood Processing Global in Barcelona, the world's largest seafood event. Our team was there to share information and views on new EU regulations and standards.

WORLD OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY DAY (28 APRIL), COLEAD welcomes and celebrates ethical and sustainable practices in the workplace. COLEAD and its programmes provide training to help managers and SMEs understand sustainable and ethical production standards and corporate social responsibility.

"COLEAD is a family; we speak from the heart" Leonard Mizzi, Head of Unit at INTPA

"We need to be ambitious and innovative," says Junior Lodge, Deputy Secretary General of the OACPS. "At COLEAD level, this means inspiring others with your good practices."

(Consultative Committee for COLEAD and its programmes, 1 December 2023)

MAY

CARIBBEAN - FOCUS ON SURINAM AND TRINIDAD & TOBAGO - With the NPPO (National Plant Protection Organisation) of Suriname, the aim is to implement good inspection and control practices. Other areas of intervention through FFM+ include capacity building for horticultural operators.

BENIN-SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT - As part of the project "Support for the agro-ecological transition of the pineapple sector in Benin", COLEAD is training the partner clusters of the DEFIA programme in sustainable soil management.

INNOVATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. Example in the mango sector through the FFM SPS programme and the CIRAD SOWIT COLEAD collaboration. Introduction of a technology for estimating predicted production yields in Ghana.

KENYA - NExT Kenya LAUNCHES GUIDES ON GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE for beans, peas and avocados.

FFM+ AND AGRINFO
PROMOTIONAL VIDEO



JUNE

FOCUS YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS – Promotion of business opportunities for young entrepreneurs at the Africa Agribusiness and Science Week, Durban, South Africa. Support through FFM+ for parallel sessions.

COLEAD DISTANCE LEARNING: 21,000 USERS IN ALL ACP COUNTRIES. Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Madagascar are the top three user countries with over 1,200 learners.

COLEAD GENERAL ASSEMBLY – Activity reports. Financial report. Strategy 2023-2025 and 33 new members welcomed.

JULY

GLOBAL YOUTH SKILLS DAY: THE CARIBBEAN ECOSYSTEM FOR YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP. The IICA-COLEAD Caribbean Agribusiness Series provided an opportunity to continue discussions at the ninth session, which focused on the successes of innovative youth-led SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) in the agribusiness sector.

EC "TRADE, PRIVATE SECTOR, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMITMENT". DG INTPA has asked COLEAD to communicate on "How to make the Green Deal a positive agenda for our partner countries". An opportunity to promote the FFM+ and AGRINFO programmes.

AUGUST

ETHIOPIA: RAPID ASSESSMENT OF THE SPS SYSTEM through FFM+ using COLEAD's Rapid SPS Assessment Tool (R-SAT) methodology. In partnership with the Ethiopian Agricultural Authority (EAA) to establish more effective SPS food quality control systems.



CLIMATE-CHANGE-RESILIENT PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS in agri-food SMEs - the way forward. PAFO COLEAD Innovation Session No. 14

MADAGASCAR: ASSESSMENT OF THE FOOD SAFETY QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SAHANALA is receiving support from COLEAD through its Fit For Market SPS programme to set up a health quality management system in order to obtain FSSC 22 000 certification for ginger processing.

SEPTEMBER

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: IMPROVEMENT OF THE COPACO TRAINING SYSTEM (1,600,000 PRODUCERS). The Confédération Paysanne du Congo (COPACO-PRP) is a professional association of 452 local organisations.

AGRINFO BOTSWANA-UE: FOCUS ON THE MEAT INDUSTRY. With the support of the Botswana Embassy in Brussels, presentation of AGRINFO and FFM+ and discussions with numerous guests representing the country's public and private sectors.

FIT FOR MARKET (FFM) AND FIT FOR MARKET SPS (FFM SPS): Launch of the external technical evaluation of the programmes.

OCTOBER

FFM+: MORE THAN 700 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, 60% OF WHICH ARE FOR AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES AND COOPERATIVES. Since the launch of the digital system for receiving applications for support under the Fit For Market+ programme at the beginning of July 2022, 716 applications for support under this new programme have been received (as of 21 September 2023)..



UGANDA - INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT

– In partnership with the Avocado Association of Uganda (AAU), testing and implementation of new data collection and calibration technologies. Aim: to maintain consistently high avocado yields while protecting the environment. Calibration of soil scanner measurements

COTE D'IVOIRE - SARA: Participation in the leading trade fair for agriculture, animal resources, fisheries and forestry in sub-Saharan Africa. Presentation and promotion of the FFM+ and AGRINFO programmes. Multi-partner meetings.

INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES TO REDUCE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE – The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and COLEAD are working together to collect and share information on the fruit and vegetable sector.

NOVEMBER

FEEDBACK FROM 200 COLEAD PARTNER BENEFICIARIES ON FFM+: They would strongly recommend COLEAD to a professional colleague, mainly because of the improved skills they have acquired as a result of COLEAD support.

NEXT KENYA: (ROM) EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME: Very positive result on all criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability), especially for cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights and environment.



TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION in the agri-food sector. PAFO COLEAD Innovation Session no. 15:

"ACCESS TO FUNDING" FOR FARMERS: COLEAD's offer through FFM+ is structured around technical assistance and training to help project leaders build their capacity in business management and business plan preparation, both technically and financially.

"HOW TO SET UP E-LEARNING PLATFORMS": Multi-country webinar for ACP training institutions.

DECEMBER

COLEAD 2023 CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: THE ASSOCIATION IS AT A CROSSROADS. This is an opportunity for each stakeholder to highlight their priorities, thoughts and constraints, whether entrepreneurial, economic or political, while reaffirming their desire to work together to bring about the expected transformation of the food system

50 YEARS OF COLEAD: COLEAD celebrated its 50th anniversary on 1 December 2023 in Brussels with 120 partners, directors, former General Delegates of the association, team members and friends of COLEAD and with more than 200 members of the association gathered for the occasion in 25 ACP countries.

FROM COP 28 TO REALITY ON THE GROUND: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE JUSTICE. COLEAD and its partners support the [United Arab Emirates' COP28 Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action](#) by helping the agricultural sector, and horticulture in particular, to improve overall social, economic and environmental sustainability.

COLEAD ACHIEVES ISO 21001 CERTIFICATION - Achieving ISO 21001 certification demonstrates COLEAD's commitment to continuous improvement in education and paves the way for further innovation and growth in the years to come.



GENDER - LAUNCH OF A SPECIFIC PLAN to contribute to gender equality in the association's field of action.



AGRINNOVATORS.ORG: FOR AND BY INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURS IN AFRICA. Launch of Agrinnovators, a platform for African entrepreneurs passionate about innovation and sustainability in the agri-food sector, launched by COLEAD and PAFO.

63 AGRICULTURAL JOBS LISTED IN A NEW COLEAD TRAINING SYSTEM TOOL. A new tool for designing, implementing and evaluating effective vocational training programmes tailored to the specific needs of the agricultural sector and the countries in our area of action.

CONSORTIUM EUROPE-AFRICA ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS (CEA FIRST). Launch of the new collaborative project bringing together 22 European and African partners, including COLEAD. Fairmiles Stakeholder Roundtable to agree on steps for a fair transition to net zero.

FAIRMILES: First meeting of the consortium on 15 December in London.



PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS MANAGED BY COLEAD

As a not-for-profit private sector association, our aim is to facilitate and implement actions that increase the contribution of the agricultural sector to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. **COLEAD designs and manages development programmes in the agricultural and food sector. Online and in the field**, we provide technical assistance, professional training and support services covering research and innovation brokerage, monitoring of regulations and standards, market knowledge, networks and alliances, and access to finance.

COLEAD works in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. COLEAD's programmes are funded by donors (mainly the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States). COLEAD also contributes to programmes implemented or co-financed by other donors, notably the French Development Agency (AFD), the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), Enabel (the Belgian Development Agency), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the OECD.

Depending on the geographical coverage, the programmes implemented by COLEAD can be local/regional or global (multi-country).



STRENGTHENING THE COMPETITIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND SPS SYSTEMS OF THE HORTICULTURAL SECTOR IN ACP COUNTRIES [FIT FOR MARKET SPS PROGRAMME - FFM SPS]



2019

ACP
countries

4 years



HORTICULTURE



The years 2019-2023 were marked by important developments for COLEAD partners, including Brexit, the 'farm to fork' strategy, the transition from the ACP Group to the Organisation of ACP States (OACPS) with the signing of the Samoa Agreement in November 2023, and the war in Ukraine. The COVID-19 pandemic also had a profound impact on the activities of COLEAD and its partners.

The FFM, FFM SPS and FFM Plus programmes were designed to:

1. Develop a centralised capacity to respond to emergencies related to EU market access (e.g. SPS compliance).
2. To increase capacity building support to the private and public sectors to contribute to more sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems.

More specifically, the formulation of the FFM SPS programme in 2018-2019 has responded to the strengthening of EU plant health requirements, changing regulations leading to the loss of access to conventional plant protection products (PPPs), and the increase in applications for support received under the FFM programme between 2016 and 2018.

Given the importance of fruit and vegetable value chains for food security and poverty reduction in OACPS member countries, COLEAD has supported the relevant authorities to comply with new EU phytosanitary regulations and to initiate development projects. In 2019 and 2020, a special effort was made to submit crop-specific dossiers to DG SANTE.

The implementation of the FFM SPS programme activities in 2023 has been adapted to:

- Monitor the launch of the FFM Plus programme (S2 2022).
- Launch the AGRINFO programme (January 2023).
- Manage the limited resources due to the previous high levels of activity.
- Carry out the final technical evaluation of the FFM and FFM SPS programmes (S2 2023).

Financial partners



Funded by
the European Union

- In 2023, the team will focus on finalising activities, consolidating lessons learned and transferring relevant activities to FFM Plus and other programmes. A request for an extension and an increase of the pre-financing threshold was accepted, extending the FFM SPS programme until 31 December 2023. Despite the disruptive global context, most indicators were met thanks to the flexibility to adjust assistance priorities. **The budget execution rate at the end of period 5 was 99.2%.** Of the nearly 500 eligible applications, 50% were from West Africa, followed by East Africa (21%), Central Africa (10%), the Caribbean (9%), Southern Africa (7%) and the Pacific (2%). The reach of the programme has been extended beyond the countries of origin of the applications thanks to a distance learning platform

reaching all 79 OACPS member countries. The FFM SPS programme, which has now come to an end, will have facilitated 275 individual technical assistance missions.

- **85** on-site training sessions.
- **122** group training sessions involving **1 742** participants.
- **58 sustainability self-assessments** carried out by producer groups and MSMEs.

These efforts have contributed to improved market access, management skills, sector linkages, SPS compliance, technical innovation and sustainable practices.



THE FFM SPS PROGRAMME (2019-2023) IN BRIEF:

- **535** requests for assistance translated into **463** development projects.
- **46** OACPS member countries directly covered by support requests
- More than **480** capacity building activities carried out during the programme.
- More than **388 000** tonnes of fruit and vegetables marketed by partners supported by the programme in all target markets, with an increase over the duration of the programme.
- More than **20 000** e-learning users, including over **13 500** from all OACPS member countries
- **2.1 million** smallholder farmers^{***}, and increasing number
- **5.7 million euros** in co-financing invested by the programme's partner beneficiaries.
- More than **800** experts/trainers supported.
- **39 900** employees in supported MSMEs, and increase (**6 450** net jobs created)
- **4.20%** market share by volume of ACP fruit and vegetables (excluding bananas) to the EU27/UK, increasing between 2018 and 2023.
- **58** sustainability self-assessments showing improvements within MSMEs between iterations on almost all sustainability criteria.
- **8** guides to good agricultural practice
- **39** technical guides and brochures.
- **14** PPP registration applications in **11** countries.
- **48** critical active ingredients tested for efficacy and residues.

^{***} Total number of smallholders reached by the programme through support to SMEs, producer groups, professional associations and farmers' organisations (excluding supranational organisations).



FINAL EVALUATION OF THE FFM AND FFM SPS PROGRAMMES*

Launched in 2016 and 2019 respectively, the FFM and FFM SPS programmes built on lessons learned from previous COLEAD initiatives, including the Pesticides Initiative Programme (PIP & PIP2) and the Development of Food Safety Systems (EDES), funded by the European Union (EU) and the Organisation of ACP States (OECS). With funding from the EU, OACPS and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) of €25 million for FFM and a contribution of €15 million from the EU and OACPS for FFM SPS, the FFM and FFM SPS programmes represent a strong commitment to sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in OACPS member countries, with a particular focus on the horticulture sector.

The final technical evaluation was carried out from September 2023 to January 2024 by two evaluators from CAPA EEIG - Expertise Advisors at the request of the European Commission. It consisted of an inception phase, a desk study phase, an intensive field mission phase in 11 countries where the two programmes were active (Suriname, Dominican Republic, Senegal, Ghana, Togo, Cameroon, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea and Fiji) and a synthesis phase to analyse and summarise the results in the final evaluation report.



Main conclusions of the evaluators:

Quality and adaptability: COLEAD has demonstrated a high level of competence and adaptability, effectively managing different national contexts and external challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and new EU phytosanitary regulations. High stakeholder relevance, strong alignment with national SPS strategies, effective response to shocks such as COVID-19, flexible adaptation to local contexts and structured follow-up were highlighted. There is a need to strengthen technical partnerships and improve communication with stakeholders to increase the effectiveness and reach of the programme.

Coordination and synergy: Strong coordination with other initiatives (e.g. STDF, GIZ, ENABEL, UNIDO) was noted, providing complementary support. However, the need to further strengthen technical partnerships and improve communication with stakeholders was also highlighted in order to increase the effectiveness and reach of the programme.

Training and monitoring: COLEAD's demand-driven approach included effective distance learning tools, although in some cases the resource constraints of national partners limited the wider dissemination of such training. Monitoring tools such as the Self

* Source: Final Evaluation Report of 'Fit for Market: Strengthening the Competitiveness and Sustainability of the ACP Horticultural Sector (FFM Programme) and 'Fit for Market. Market - Strengthening the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Systems of the ACP Horticultural Sector (FFM-SPS Programme)'. The final evaluation was carried out by CAPA EEIG - Expertise Advisors in 2023 at the request of the European Commission. The report was published in January 2024



Assessment System (SAS) and the JAMBO system, while useful, need to be refined to be more accurate. **The COLEAD network of expert trainers is recognised as strong, as is the sustainability self-assessment system for MSMEs and producer groups, which ensures continuous improvement and adherence to best practice in sustainability.**

Employment and market access: The programmes have made a significant contribution to stabilising or increasing employment, facilitating market access through certification and promoting

sustainable practices. This has led to tangible socio-economic improvements, with two-thirds of MSMEs reporting improved employment, income and nutrition.

Gender equality : Efforts to increase women's participation in stable, decent jobs have been successful. Women-owned businesses have benefited from online training and support, and many women run MSMEs or hold leadership positions.

Access to finance: Access to finance remains a major challenge for MSMEs and producers due to high interest rates and stringent

collateral requirements. COLEAD's Access to Finance department is developing strategies to address these issues.

Sustainability: The programmes are considered to be in line with OACPS and EU policies, with a focus on gender mainstreaming and environmental sustainability, with a strong emphasis on promoting technical innovation and sustainable practices.

Although many beneficiaries feel capable of sustaining the results of the FFM initiative, fewer have the resources to do so. Continued external support and better integration with financial institutions are needed to ensure sustainable growth.

Socio-economic impact

The socio-economic impact assessment, involving 74 MSMEs, focused on food security and nutrition, living standards and household investment. **The FFM programmes had a positive impact on livelihoods**, with significant improvements in employment, income and nutrition. Many beneficiaries prioritised children's education and food security after their incomes improved. In addition, the reduction of EU notifications and the strengthening of the SPS control capacity of NPPOs and exporters were notable achievements.

Export Diversification and Market Access

After the COVID-19 period, ACP exports to the EU increased. However, due (in part) to the complexity of EU regulations, ACP operators are increasingly exploring regional and local market opportunities. Improved access to market information and regulations, although some beneficiaries were not yet making full use of resources such as AGRINFO at the time of the evaluation, has played a crucial role in this diversification effort.



OVERALL CONCLUSION OF THE EVALUATORS

"The FFM and FFM-SPS programmes have been relevant and effective in addressing stakeholder needs, improving SPS compliance and promoting sustainable horticultural practices. Despite the challenges faced, particularly in terms of access to finance and sustainability,

the programmes have made significant progress in improving market access, employment and socio-economic conditions in the ACP horticultural sector. COLEAD's strategic and adaptive approach and strong coordination with other initiatives have been key to these achievements".

STRENGTHENING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HORTICULTURAL SECTOR IN THE ACP COUNTRIES (FIT FOR MARKET PLUS - FFM+ PROGRAMME)



2022

ACP
countries

5 years



HORTICULTURE



Financial partners



Funded by
the European Union

General context

The Fit For Market Plus (FFM+) programme was launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate its economic impact on the horticulture sector in the member countries of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). This programme supports the transition to more sustainable food systems, addressing key areas identified in the European Green Deal's 'farm to fork' strategy. Evolving challenges since the launch of the programme, such as climate change, Brexit and the war in Ukraine, have highlighted the importance of resilience and adaptability for the ACP horticulture sector.

Methodological framework

The FFM+ methodological framework, the most comprehensive intervention designed by COLEAD, underwent numerous adjustments during the first period. The lessons learned from the final technical evaluation of the previous FFM SPS-FFM programmes and the comments of the Consultative Committee have been incorporated in the second period in order to align the programme's priority results with COLEAD's strategic orientations. Thanks to these new inputs, the revision

of the Logical Framework can be finalised in period 3. The main achievements of the period include the certification of COLEAD's vocational training system according to ISO 21001 standards and the finalisation of COLEAD's gender equality strategy and action plan.

Activities during the period

Visibility and promotion efforts during the second period were reinforced through information campaigns and online series, reaching a wide audience and attracting new potential partner-beneficiaries. 411 applications for support were received, out of a total of 992 applications from 54 OACPS Member States since the launch of the programme. Applications have come mainly from MSMEs and producer groups, with a notable shift towards smaller, less export-oriented operations compared to previous programmes. Almost 80% of these applicants had not received support from previous programmes managed by COLEAD over the last five years. 32% spontaneously highlighted the fact that COVID-19 had had a negative impact on their businesses and activities. 44% spontaneously acknowledged the negative impact of climate change on their business.

All MSMEs and producer groups eligible for a Standard Support Development Project (SSP) or a Tailored Development Project (TMP) will be further analysed using the Sustainability Self-Assessment System (SAS). In 2023, 174 SASs were launched, data were collected for 140 MSMEs and 66 sustainability reports were shared with partner beneficiaries. The second FFM+ period focused on absorbing the volume of requests for assistance,

setting up development projects (289) and accelerating the implementation of technical assistance activities: 76 group training sessions, 67 on-site support activities, 17 post-training support.

The scope of FFM+ goes beyond formal requests for assistance and development projects. Through a strict policy of open (re)sourcing, COLEAD aims to achieve

maximum impact for the greatest number of stakeholders. By way of example, an analysis of the learners registered on the COLEAD learning platform shows that since the start of the FFM+ (December 2021): (i) 16,825 learners have joined the e-learning platform, of whom 8,805 are from OACPS member states; (ii) these learners represent 249 states/territories, of which all OACPS member states are represented.



TRACKING EU AGRI-FOOD POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS [AGRINFO PROGRAMME]



Financial partners



AGRINFO is being implemented at a time when the EU is putting in place an ambitious regulatory programme to meet climate change targets, as evidenced by its "Green Pact" and "Farm to Table" strategy. Due to the far-reaching nature of the new policies, trading partners are also facing changes to maintain access to EU markets and need to remain informed and engaged.

AGRINFO identifies, monitors and communicates information on developments that may affect the competitiveness, market access and trade dynamics of partner beneficiaries. It adds value to existing sources of information by focusing on the new policies and regulations most relevant to low- and middle-income countries, identifying potential impacts and recommended actions, and communicating proactively so that this information reaches the people who need it, at the right time and in an understandable form.

AGRINFO was launched in January 2022.

Although it builds on ideas and activities developed in previous EU-funded technical assistance programmes managed by COLEAD, it is a new programme with a scope that goes beyond the experience and historic mandate of the team. The first year of AGRINFO was a start-up phase to put in place the necessary

expertise, information systems, procedures, partnerships and methodologies. The delivery of concrete results in terms of the programme indicators began on a large scale from 2023. The priorities in 2023 were:

- **Consolidating the information system** (in particular strengthening the network and contact list, and refining the database and content in response to user feedback).
- **Launching proactive communication** to reach end-users.
- **Strengthening engagement with key partners** (including EUDs, embassies, donors/cooperation programmes, NGOs, EU sectoral organisations).
- **Conducting impact studies** on topics agreed with the contractor.

An annual Steering Committee and regular working meetings with the contractor were organised to present and discuss progress and plans, and to refine implementation methods and tools.

The 2023 targets have been fully met. The tools, frameworks, systems and procedures necessary to achieve the objectives of the programme have been put in place for the full implementation of AGRINFO activities in

2023. AGRINFO has produced consistent and high quality content during this period and records of all relevant changes to EU policies and regulations published during 2023 have been prepared and uploaded to the database. These records describe the changes and provide a summary of the potential impacts and recommended actions for beneficiary partners.

More than 180 new records were added to the database during 2023, bringing the total to 340 at the end of the reporting period.

These include all policy and regulatory changes published since August 2022 affecting agri-food and fisheries' exports from AGRINFO partner countries, as well as 30 explanatory documents providing an overview of the context/regulatory framework and briefing notes on key EU policy initiatives.

Building the AGRINFO network and contact list of partner beneficiaries was a key objective in 2023, recognising that the success of the programme depends on access to information for those who need it.

A regular newsletter kept beneficiaries up to date with the latest changes. It is sent to over 3,000 targeted subscribers and covered 142 EU partner countries by the end of 2023. In response to feedback, improvements were made to the AGRINFO platform and



new tools were developed to proactively communicate on critical issues and with hard-to-reach partners. The AGRINFO methodology for prioritising vulnerable countries and sectors was refined and increasingly used to guide AGRINFO market analysis, targeted communication and scaling up. One impact study was completed during the year and two others were launched to better understand the impact of certain changes on stakeholders in partner countries.

VALUE CHAIN FOR DEVELOPMENT (VCA4D)

Value Chain Analysis for Development is a tool funded by the European Commission / INTPA (VCA4D CTR 2016/375-804 and 2017/392-417) and implemented in partnership with Agrinatura. It uses a systematic methodological framework to analyse VC in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and agroforestry. The aim of VC4D is to provide decision-makers with evidence-based information to support sustainable development strategies. It is aimed at policy-makers and stakeholders, in line with the EU's objectives as a donor and as part of its approach to policy dialogue.

In addition to the ongoing engagement and collaboration on VCA4D studies carried out in fruit and vegetable value chains in OACPS member countries, a specific collaboration between VCA4D and COLEAD was initiated in 2021 to provide complementary elements to the VCA4D functional analysis, providing a global and in-depth perspective of markets and relevant information to calculate or better interpret economic and integration indicators. In 2023, COLEAD contributed to the following VCA4D studies:

- Cheese in Colombia
- Cocoa in Colombia
- Peanuts in Niger
- Cowpeas in Niger
- Cashmere in Mongolia
- Cotton in Tajikistan



EXAMPLE OF COLEAD'S CONTRIBUTION TO A VC4D STUDY



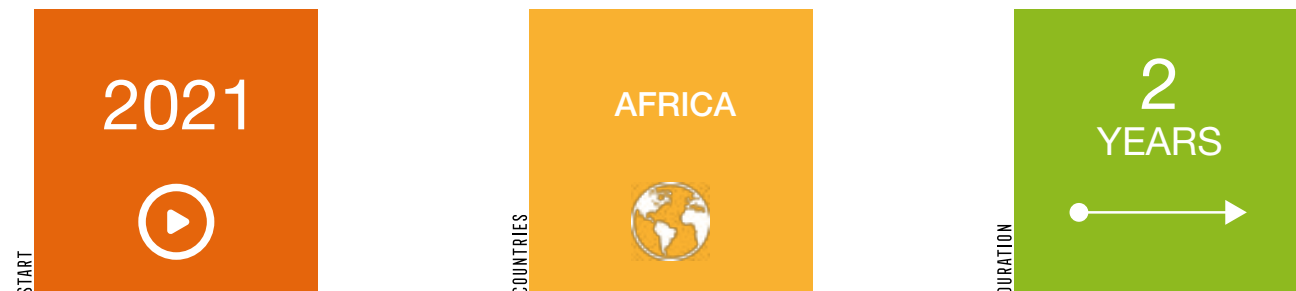
DEVELOPING SMART INNOVATION THROUGH AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (DESIRA LIFT, EUROPEAN UNION)



Leveraging the DeSIRA initiative for the transformation of agri-food systems. DeSIRA-LIFT is a support service for the DeSIRA initiative, a European Commission-funded initiative that aims to contribute to the climate-smart, productive and sustainable transformation of agri-food systems in Southern countries.

DeSIRA supports research and innovation projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America and strengthens research capacities and governance involving key actors at national, regional and global levels. DeSIRA-LIFT is the result of close collaboration between Agrinatura (the European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development), the European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) and the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA).

COLEAD leads Service Area 2 - Support to African umbrella organisations for agricultural development research (CORAF, ASARECA, CCARDESA and FARA), scaling up (AFAAS) and higher education (RUFORUM), and adds value to the global TAP and GFAR initiatives. This service area identifies and implements support to ex-Pillar 4 organisations in close consultation with these organisations. An extension of the technical implementation deadline has been granted until May 2025.



The main activities related to the key stages of the project in 2023 include:

Launch of the study on financing innovation as part of the DeSIRA LIFT project

COLEAD, as lead partner of the second service line of the DeSIRA-LIFT project ("Leveraging the DeSIRA initiative for agri-food systems transformation"), helped to define the scope of a study on financing mechanisms for responsible innovation to contribute to the transformation of agri-food systems in Africa, examining the diversity of financing mechanisms for agricultural innovation in Africa at different stages of the innovation process, and supporting DeSIRA projects in identifying relevant financing mechanisms to scale up their innovations.

8th African Agribusiness and Science Week (5-8 June 2023, Durban, South Africa)

COLEAD (as part of the DeSIRA LIFT project and the FFM+ programme) contributed to the programme of the 8th African Agribusiness and Science Week by co-organising a parallel (hybrid) session with CGIAR, IFAD, FARA on "Enhancing Climate Resilience, Management of Natural Resources and Transition of Agricultural Systems", which brought together a diverse pool of stakeholders to share experiences and evidence on how agro-ecological policies can contribute to climate change resilience and sustainability of agri-food systems in Africa.

Launching the African Research and Innovation Strategy under DeSIRA LIFT

FARA requested support from DeSIRA LIFT to develop a research and innovation framework that will contribute to the implementation of the CAADP/Malabo commitments. DeSIRA LIFT (1) organised a consultation to evaluate the current strategy, identify where it has been successful and where it has fallen short of expectations and why; (2) designed a methodology and prepared a roadmap for the development and launch of the new strategy.

Start of activities with RUFORUM as part of DeSIRA LIFT

COLEAD has started working with the Regional Universities' Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) to develop joint activities to (1) integrate the ideas and



results of the DeSIRA initiative into curriculum development in higher education; and (2) strengthen the capacity of university research to generate commercial products and services for job creation in sustainable agriculture and food systems.

Contribution to the 10th PCT Partnership Assembly (21-23 November 2023)

First collaboration with the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) at the 10th TAP Partnership Assembly focusing on: (1) agricultural and food research and innovation strategies across continents; and (2) women's experiences in capacity building and innovation in the seed sector in West and Central Africa, in collaboration with the West and Central African Women Seed Producers Network, CORAF, CAADP-XP4 (Gender Group) and the TAP Secretariat.



IMPROVING KENYA'S HORTICULTURAL EXPORTS (NEXt KENYA PROGRAMME)



The NEXt (New Export Trade) Kenya programme aims to increase the contribution of Kenya's horticulture sector to household income and improve food security and nutrition by strengthening the resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability of the country's horticulture value chains. The programme aims to ensure sustainable improvements in the capacity of all stakeholders to adapt to changing sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), trade, social and environmental requirements in local, regional and international markets. Since its operational launch in May 2020, the NEXt Kenya programme has been supporting MSMEs, farmers and producer groups, as well as their enabling environment (e.g. competent authorities, BMOs), to meet EU and other international market standards for products of Kenyan origin.

Key highlights in 2023:

- **A high level of activity implementation (over 160 technical assistance and training activities).** As a result, the financial implementation of the programme is broadly in line with planned disbursements and the time elapsed since the launch of the programme. The technical implementation of the programme is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2024.
- **The programme has continued to receive requests for support** from key stakeholders, with a particular focus on MSMEs, holding discussions with them and designing/signing development projects. In 2023, 43 requests for support were received, of which 22 were from MSMEs, and 47 projects were signed with partner beneficiaries.



The National Horticulture Working Group launched the roll-out of Good Practice Guides (GPGs) for avocado, beans and peas in May 2023. These guides were developed by public and private stakeholders and validated through a participatory process involving technical working groups and a steering committee. The aim of the guides is to help the different actors in the value chains meet sanitary and phytosanitary requirements and commercial quality requirements.

- **A trade mission to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in October 2023,** to explore trade and investment opportunities, assess market potential and foster partnerships in the horticulture sector. The key findings of the mission were that the UAE offers significant market potential for Kenyan products, particularly in the horticulture sector.
- **A Results Based Monitoring (ROM) mission, for the NEXt Kenya programme was conducted in November 2023.** The results were very positive across

all criteria, namely relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, with a particular focus on cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights and the environment. It was found that there are strong implementation mechanisms and methodologies, including good technical human resources, supported by extensive digital resources, which provide different ways of achieving the objectives of the intervention.

- **A survey was conducted among NExT Kenya's partner beneficiaries to gather their feedback on the performance and relevance of the programme.** 85 organisations (68% response rate) rated the quality of support received at 8.1/10. Most partners would recommend the programme to a professional colleague, mainly because of the improved skills they have gained through COLEAD's support (score 8.8/10).



Financial partners



Funded by
the European Union

STRENGTHENING THE PHYTOSANITARY INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN GUINEA (STDF PROJECT IN GUINEA)



The first half of 2023 was marked by the decision to extend the project by one year (new end date: 30 April 2024). This decision is explained by the fact that the implementation of this project has encountered difficulties that have had a negative impact on the achievement of its objectives:

- The COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a significant delay in the implementation of all the project's activities due to the slow processing of files at all levels;
- The reforms undertaken by the Guinean authorities after 5 September 2021, when the Comité national du rassemblement pour le développement (CNRD) (National Committee of Reconciliation and Development) took power.

The purpose of this extension was to carry out all the remaining activities planned and necessary to achieve the objectives of the project which aims to strengthen phytosanitary capacities in order to improve market access and food and nutrition security in Guinea. It is also planned to further develop certain results by implementing activities complementary to those originally planned by the project, in the light of the changing needs of the project beneficiaries.

As a result, 5 activities initiated in previous semesters were completed in 2023:

- Design of a test protocol and installation of new weather stations to allow a general monitoring plan applied to potatoes.
- Training in the potato late blight monitoring system for technicians and additional extension workers in other producer organisations, as well as agents from the National Plant Protection Directorate (DNPV-DS).
- Feedback workshop for stakeholders in the potato sector
- Participation in the DNPV-DS Ramadan Fair

Other notable activities in 2023:

- Organisation of a steering committee
- Improvement of the draft guide to good phytosanitary practices for potato cultivation

Financial partners



SUPPORT FOR THE AGRO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF THE PINEAPPLE SECTOR IN BENIN (ENABEL, DEFIA PROJECT)

The specific objective of the project "Support for the agro-ecological transition of the pineapple sector in Benin", implemented by COLEAD between January 2022 and July 2023 (the end date for the implementation of technical activities), was to enable operators in the pineapple agricultural value chain (VC) to begin a gradual transition to agro-ecology, while meeting the requirements of local, regional and international markets. The main objective was to lay the groundwork and initiate a process of transition, while putting in place the elements of capacity building for the different actors and the tools for medium and long-term impact analysis.

Through this project, COLEAD aimed to facilitate information, reflection and the initiation of a process of agro-ecological transition towards a sustainable production system, for the pineapple sector in Benin by providing Beninese operators with support and qualified service providers in key areas such as: agro-ecological practices, water management, soil fertility conservation and recovery, organic matter production and management, biodiversity conservation and recovery, production diversification, crop associations, product processing, production planning and internal training.

Through this project, COLEAD has been able to raise awareness among all stakeholders in the pineapple VC about agroecology, its principles and its benefits for production and marketing systems.

The aim was to lay the foundations for a framework conducive to a transition towards more ecological intensification.

In a participatory manner, the project identified current good practices and offered support to Beninese stakeholders to initiate an agro-ecological transition, in particular through the implementation of responsible and sustainable environmental management practices.

Some of the highlights include:

- Participatory reflection within the pineapple industry to (i) present the basics of agroecology and the key principles of the transition, and (ii) initiate discussions on the areas of work that

could be envisaged within the pineapple industry in the short, medium and long term.

- Initial diagnosis using COLEAD's sustainability self-assessment tool among the 15 aggregators.
- Training of experts in sustainable resource management (soil, water, energy, waste management and recycling, greenhouse gases, etc.), agro-ecological practices, the path towards agro-ecology and organic production.
- 15 clusters have been specifically supported.
- 3 methods for the recovery of pineapple waste and by-products were identified as economically viable.

Financial partners




IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE MANGO SECTOR IN GUINEA-BISSAU (UNIDO)

The project was put on hold in 2023. Activities will resume in 2024.

Financial partners



NEW PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS FOR 2024

- Sustainable strengthening of cooperatives in the coffee and cocoa sectors (Shared interest)
- CEA FIRST - Europe-Africa consortium for research and innovation on food systems transformation (European union)
- SIA project - food safety in the Dominican Republic (Ministry of Agriculture and Inter-American Development Bank)
- FAO online training toolbox on plant health regulations (FAO)
- Strengthening phytosanitary capacity to promote horticultural exports from Senegal (STDF)
- And others...





COLEAD'S VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM IS ISO 21001-CERTIFIED.

COLEAD departments involved

Technical departments, in particular training, and support services

Global and local programmes

All

SDGs



In December 2023, COLEAD was recommended for ISO 21001 certification by Tuv Nord. ISO 21001 is a Management System standard specifically designed for educational organisations, aiming to support competence development through teaching, learning, or research, irrespective of their size, type, or method of delivery.

This significant milestone aligns with COLEAD's overarching vision of "Growing People" and marks over two decades of dedicated efforts in the development and implementation of training programmes in the agrifood sector. The last three years have seen rigorous work to consolidate the Training Management System (TMS), culminating in external recognition of its relevance.

COLEAD's training system is currently based around three strategic areas:

- **Guarantee a coherent, structured, high-quality training offer** that meets the needs

and expectations of learners and enables their organisations, and the agricultural sector in general to sustain, adapt and develop in the long term.

- **Strengthen the expertise and skills**, both technical and educational, of human resources so that they can provide day-to-day support to the agricultural sector
- **Increase the number of people** benefiting from skills enhancement through smart partnerships and by encouraging the systematic and cascading transfer of knowledge and skills.

Every operator of the value chain, from managers to workers, from middle managers to small producers, has a role to play in ensuring the sustainability of agriculture and food systems. Training means continually capitalising on and disseminating knowledge, know-how and specialised expertise to contribute to the profound transformation of agriculture and food systems and ensure that it can play its full role in contributing the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While obtaining ISO 21001 is an accomplishment, COLEAD views it as the initial step in a longer journey. The real work begins now – making the TMS operational at every level of the organisation. This involves implementing audit recommendations, both internal and external, and ensuring the system becomes an integral part of a continuous improvement approach.

“We are proud to have attained ISO 21001 certification, which validates the robustness of our Training Management System. However, this is just the beginning.”

Emmanuelle Prunier, Quality Assurance Manager at COLEAD

As part of COLEAD’s commitment to following an open-(re)source policy, the association made available in 2023 their comprehensive [Job Description catalogue](#) and [Training catalogue](#).

Looking ahead, COLEAD anticipates more exciting developments in 2024.

“Our commitment is not only to achieve standards but to consistently enhance our educational processes and methodologies.”

Laura Wauters, Manager of COLEAD’s Training Department.

COLEAD’s attainment of ISO 21001 certification stands as a testament to their commitment to continuous educational improvement and sets the stage for further innovation and growth in the years to come, to increase the overall impact of the organisation’s contribution to reaching SDGs.



SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS TAKING PART IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS

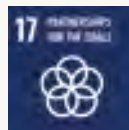
COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training, Market Insights

Global and local programmes



SDGs



Business membership organisations (BMOs) play a crucial role in representing and defending the interests of their members. In the agricultural sector, they act as platforms to encourage collaboration, stimulate innovation and facilitate business growth. Active participation in trade fairs such as Fruit Logistica and BioFach is one of the main ways in which these associations achieve these objectives. These renowned trade events offer unique opportunities to showcase their members' products, network with industry players and gain valuable knowledge. Through its programmes, COLEAD supports them before, during and after these trade fairs to

- Promote and position the origin of products through attractive exhibition stands and/or a quality B2B commitment.
- Facilitate networking and exchanges with peers in the sector, potential buyers, suppliers, service providers and public authority representatives.

- Understanding industry trends and prospects: by attending seminars, conferences and panel discussions, association representatives gain valuable insights into the latest developments in the industry and markets.
- Seizing opportunities for business development: trade associations can take advantage of these events to facilitate B2B meetings, interactions between buyers and sellers, and even international trade missions.

Through a programme such as FFM+, BMO from member countries of the OACPS are encouraged and supported at their request to take part in European trade fairs such as Fruit Logistica, Biofach or Fruit Attraction. Many associations are not yet sufficiently organised or do not have sufficient resources to travel abroad. This is why COLEAD's Market Insights Department has structured the feedback from this type of trade fair in 2023 so that it can be transferred in the form of webinars, thereby facilitating access to commercial and economic information for these associations and their members.

NEW INFORMATION TOOL ON EU MARKET REGULATIONS ADAPTED TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT - EXAMPLE OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE



A summary of the changes in EU regulations and policies introduced, updated every three months and adapted to the specific needs of the requesting country.

In line with AGRINFO's commitment to adapting information to the local context of partner countries, a major new information tool was developed in 2023.

A request from the Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of Agriculture (Direction de la Protection des Végétaux, du Contrôle et de la Qualité) was forwarded to AGRINFO via their Embassy in Brussels. Key stakeholders from the national public authorities expressed the need for additional support to extract the most relevant information for their main export sectors and to identify the concrete actions needed to comply with the regulations. They asked for additional help with this task.

AGRINFO has therefore prepared a draft quarterly summary of regulations tailored to Côte d'Ivoire (CI). This is a summary of recent changes in EU regulations and policies introduced over the

previous three months which affect exports from Côte d'Ivoire to the EU.

From January 2024, this document: "Quarterly overview of new EU regulations and policies affecting the agri-food and fish export sectors in Côte d'Ivoire" will be provided on a regular basis. The information is provided in a format that makes it easier to disseminate in a timely manner to stakeholders (end-users) who need to take proactive measures to avoid potential trade disruptions.

In the future, AGRINFO will develop this tool more widely - within the resources available - which means that it will be necessary to prioritise and target those who will benefit most, particularly countries with less access to information resources and smaller trade missions. Applications have already been received from Zambia and Zimbabwe.

COLEAD departments involved

Regulations and Standards

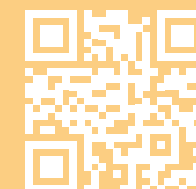
Global programme



SDGs



AGRINFO.EU



COLEAD-PAFO PARTNERSHIP: AGRINNOVATORS.ORG, A PLATFORM FOR AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS PASSIONATE ABOUT INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

COLEAD departments involved

Networks and Alliances

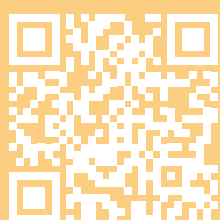
Global programme



SDGs



AGRINNOVATORS.ORG



Since 2020, the Pan African Farmers’ Organisation (PAFO) and COLEAD have established a strong partnership to build the capacity of suppliers, processors and smallholders in Africa to produce affordable, safe and nutritious food for national, regional and international markets.

The focus is on innovations along value chains to transform food systems, promote sustainable agriculture and mobilise investment. Regular sessions are organised each year, highlighting successful and outstanding entrepreneurs in areas such as the circular economy, value-addition, nutritious and healthy food, and technological innovations. Fourteen sessions have been organised up to the end of 2023, with nearly 15,000 registered participants. A company profile was developed for each company, with 60 profiles produced over the period.

The Agrinnovators.org blog now consolidates all the information relating to innovation sessions

and impact stories, and provides a space for exchanges and networking between entrepreneurs. Every element, every piece of content and every interaction on the site tells a story. It’s truly inspiring to see the aspirations and innovations of so many agripreneurs come to life in this digital space. The Agrinnovators’ blog features stories, ideas and advice from agripreneurs who are helping to transform the food system in Africa through their creativity, resilience and vision. In future, the blog will increasingly highlight trends in technology and opportunities in the agri-food sector (urban agriculture, vertical farms, circular economy and social innovation, etc.).

ACCESS TO FINANCE: COLEAD'S OFFER FOCUSES ON IMPROVING THE ABILITY OF AGRIPRENEURS TO NAVIGATE THE FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEM MORE EFFECTIVELY



More and more of the partner-beneficiaries of COLEAD's work through its programmes have expressed critical needs in terms of business management and access to finance. More specifically (i) the need for the means to determine the viability of their agro-project (Business Model Canvas) before embarking on the search for finance and (ii) knowledge of the basic concepts of finance (e.g. what is access to finance, what does it mean, why do you need it, etc.). COLEAD's training offer has taken this into account and has evolved to incorporate these new, more basic needs adapted to a self-learning audience. This should enable them to make more informed decisions and achieve tangible results within their organisation. In future, tutored training is planned.

Alongside this new training offer, COLEAD's Access to Finance Department analyses and processes specific requests from entrepreneurs in this field, as well as possible sources of finance (SOF). The department structures its SOF network through ongoing interaction with a number of relevant players, including Kampani, Shared Interest, ABSA, I&P, CSAF,

AgriFI and BIO Invest. During discussions with these SOFs, COLEAD's resources are presented in an attempt to identify companies in the SOF portfolio that could benefit from them. For example, as part of NExT Kenya, the relationship with ABSA Kenya took the form of a webinar attended by more than 50 employees working on the bank's agricultural activities. Exchanges with, for example, Kampani (a Belgium-based impact fund with around €15 million under management), Investisseurs et Partenaires (I&P), BIO Invest and others also illustrate COLEAD's willingness to partner with relevant financial service providers to consolidate its service offering in A2F in order to better serve its partner beneficiaries under FFM Plus.

COLEAD's approach to access to finance is not just about facilitating finance. It's about instilling financial knowledge, understanding, equipping our partner-beneficiaries with the right tools, training and knowledge to make informed decisions that can drive their businesses forward.

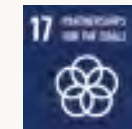
COLEAD departments involved

Access to Finance, Training, Technical Assistance

Global programme



SDGs



Funded by the European Union

CARIBBEAN: FOCUS ON SURINAME - TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

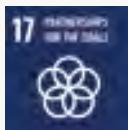
COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training, Market Insights, Regulations and Standards

Global programmes



SDGs



The Fit For Market Plus (FFM+) programme was launched in the Caribbean Region in May 2022 and in November 2022 through local workshops.

41 applications for support were received in 2023, including 10 from Suriname and 17 from Trinidad and Tobago, heralding numerous development projects. The actions envisaged by COLEAD via FFM+ and partnerships in the region aim to improve market access for Caribbean fruit and vegetables by adopting sustainable practices. COLEAD is highlighting changes in market access conditions affecting exports to the EU, identifying areas for action by public and private players, notably through its AGRINFO programme.

FOCUS SURINAME

After the R-SAT exercise in 2022, implementation of the action plan signed with Suriname’s NPPO remains strategic. It focuses on the management of Thrips and other pests on aubergine and ethnic vegetables, and on authorisation to export

Margose. Support includes capacity building for the authorities and private players (production/export companies, professional organisations, consultants). COLEAD is also working with the Polytechnic College Suriname (PTC) to improve online technical content and set up a learning management system (LMS).

FOCUS TRINIDAD-ET-TOBAGO

COLEAD is building the capacity of horticultural operators, mainly processing MSMEs and business support structures, through training and coaching. Identifying and understanding the practical problems faced by businesses in terms of their activities and access to markets is a priority, including regulatory and commercial compliance. Local businesses (confectionery production, fruit processing, plant-based ice cream) face challenges such as food management in line with international standards, logistical and packaging constraints, market access and MSME development.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE: DEVELOPMENTS IN COLEAD'S SOIL MANAGEMENT OFFERING



Improved training in sustainable soil fertility management

The results of the sustainability self-assessment reports and field missions in 2023 have highlighted the need to improve sustainable soil management. The need for such training stems from the imperative for farmers to adopt practices that conserve water and soil, reduce energy consumption and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. To meet this need, COLEAD has designed a collective training initiative on "sustainable soil management".

The initial pilot results in 2021 revealed shortcomings in the effectiveness of the training due to its overly theoretical approach and the lack of practical exercises and development of action plans. The programme was therefore consolidated and improved. The revised course was piloted and refined on the basis of feedback from participants, ensuring its relevance and applicability. The aim of the "Sustainable soil fertility management" training

course is to give farm managers, horticultural executives and technicians the skills they need to manage soil fertility sustainably and implement the best practices adapted to their specific context.

The training is aimed at a wide range of stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, farm owners, horticultural producers, production managers, nursery managers and harvest managers. The first pilot session welcomed participants from Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training, Research and Innovation Brokerage

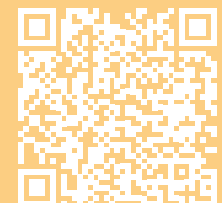
Global programme



SDGs



TRAINING CATALOGUE



Funded by the European Union

SUPPORT FOR THE AGRO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF THE PINEAPPLE SECTOR IN BENIN

COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training, Research & Innovation Brokerage

Local programme



SDGs



Diagnostic analysis of the sustainability and agro-ecological practices of 15 clusters using COLEAD and FAO tools

A diagnosis of the aggregators in the fifteen DEFIA partner clusters was carried out using COLEAD's sustainability self-assessment tool (SAS). This tool, developed by COLEAD for companies, growers and cooperatives operating in the fruit and vegetable sector, consists of a checklist to record their current practices and a series of numerical indicators to measure key figures such as turnover, yields, profits, trade flows in terms of volume and value, human resources data, including wages and staff turnover, soil health, water and energy consumption. The data collected are used to produce a report for each operator, illustrating the situation at time T and including a series of recommendations. The reports produced were shared with each aggregator.

The diagnosis of the agroecological practices of the aggregators of the fifteen DEFIA partner clusters was carried out using the TAPE tool (Tool for

Agroecological Performance Evaluation) developed by the FAO. This tool, which is based on the 10 elements of agroecology as defined by the FAO, aims to measure the multidimensional performance of agroecological systems across the different dimensions of sustainability. It applies a step-by-step approach at farm level and also collects information and provides results at community and territorial level. TAPE was rolled out to a sample of 307 pineapple growers. Overall, it emerged that the pineapple value chain in Benin is still at an early stage in its agro-ecological transition. As a result, a number of areas for improvement were identified.

TECHNICAL ITINERARIES AND PRODUCTION GUIDES TO ENSURE THAT CROPS ARE PRODUCED SAFELY, SUSTAINABLY AND EFFICIENTLY



Over the years, COLEAD has developed a series of technical itineraries and crop protection guides for operators in the ACP horticultural sector.

These tools provide advice on best practice in crop production and protection. They can help to ensure that crops are produced in a safe, sustainable and efficient way, while promoting good farming practices and protecting human and environmental health, as well as ensuring regulatory and commercial compliance.

COLEAD's technical itineraries and guides are continually updated and developed to reflect new research findings, changes in the regulatory, commercial, political and operational environments, and in particular to address the issue of sustainability. Climate change, increasing pressure on natural resources (particularly soil and water) and biodiversity loss all call for urgent improvements to food and farming systems.

Over the period, 11 technical itineraries and crop protection guides were updated via the FFM SPS and FFM + programmes (Taro/Dasheen, Citrus, Sweet potato, Ginger, Okra, Papaya, Passion fruit, Pineapple, Brassicaceae, Cucumber, Yam). **The sustainable production guide for green beans has been finalised. 7 technical itineraries were restructured into sustainable production guides:** Pineapple (Cayenne smooth, MD2, sugar loaf), Capsicum, Taro/Dasheen cassava, Potato, Citrus and Coconut. **10 sustainable production guides are also being updated:** Amaranth, Brassicaceae, Aubergine, Sweet Potato, Passion Fruit, Ginger, Okra, Papaya, Cucumber and Yam.

COLEAD departments involved

Research & Innovation Brokerage

Global programmes



SDGs



Funded by the European Union

IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYTOSANITARY SYSTEM IN GUINEA

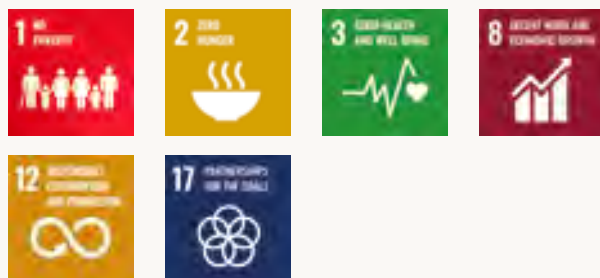
COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training, Research and Innovation Brokerage

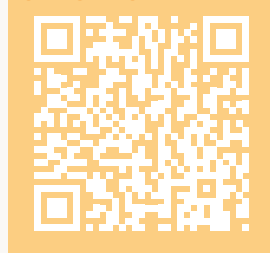
Local programme



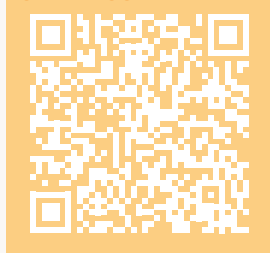
SDGs



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR POTATO



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MANGO



The STDF project in Guinea has made significant progress in several key areas linked to the development of the potato and mango value chains targeted by the project.

Improving governance

A draft law in compliance with the IPPC and the WTO SPS Agreement has been prepared and submitted for approval. In addition, regulatory texts for the application of this law, covering phytosanitary surveillance, inspection and certification, have been prepared. A workshop has been organised to validate these texts. The next step is to ensure that the draft becomes an effective law and is notified to the IPPC.

Strengthening the operational processes of the phytosanitary system

The procedures for pineapple, cashew nuts and potatoes provided for in the ISO17020 standard will now be finalised. A new system for monitoring processing and disseminating export statistics has been finalised and is in use, and will continue to be used for the 2024 mango campaign. The process

of developing good practice guides for mango and potato will be finalised before the end of the programme.

Strengthening the skills of key stakeholders

An internal capacity-building system will be set up for the DNPV-DS, with the creation of an Internal Training Unit (UFI) responsible for planning and monitoring training courses. Training courses have been and will continue to be organised to pass on the key messages of the guide to good potato practice to growers, by building the capacity of extension workers.

Strengthening communication dynamics

During discussions on extending the project, it was decided that the DNPV-DS would organise an "International Plant Health Day" in 2024.

ETHIOPIA: RAPID ASSESSMENT OF THE SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM



Ethiopia has one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa and is home to Africa's second-largest population (around 100 million) after Nigeria. The country has a total surface area of 1.12 million km². Agriculture contributes 45% of the gross domestic product and employs over 80% of the population. The federal government is currently aiming to expand and diversify outlets. European markets are emerging as a priority destination for Ethiopian products. Markets in the Middle East, China and other regional destinations in Africa are also important. In order to gain greater access to these markets, and recognising the need for the horticultural sector to evolve towards high value-added production, the sector is calling for structural transformations.

In this context, COLEAD has established a partnership with the Ethiopian Agricultural Authority (EAA) with the aim of setting up more effective SPS food quality control systems. In Ethiopia, SPS systems and activities are the responsibility

of the State. As part of this partnership, COLEAD and EAA assessed Ethiopia's national SPS system using COLEAD's Rapid SPS Assessment Tool (R-SAT) methodology, which is designed to focus on plant health and safety control systems within the avocado value chain. The approach used was conducted in a step-by-step sequence of activities with a technical working group made up of public and private stakeholders.

The aim is to facilitate the development of a national priority action plan to strengthen SPS systems, so that it is firmly anchored in a strategic vision accepted by all stakeholders.

COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training

Global programmes



SDGs



Funded by the European Union

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY - CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS IN KENYA

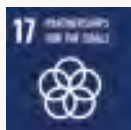
COLEAD departments involved

Technical Assistance, Training

Local programme



SDGs



Over the same period, the NExT Kenya programme trained staff from horticultural production and export companies in "working conditions"

The training aimed to inform and equip participants with the context and skills needed to implement a social policy within their companies, with the specific aim of documenting and improving general working conditions within the supply chain.

This type of training is in line with COLEAD's Sustainable Development Charter and with market demand. On the international market, and more particularly in the European Union, consumers are sensitive to social practices and want to buy products from an environment that offers fair and decent working conditions for workers and small producers in the supply chain. To prove their compliance, horticultural companies are often required to be certified to social standards. One of the most common standards is GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP), a complement to GLOBALG.A.P. that is compatible with the GLOBALG.A.P. IFA standard for fruit and vegetables, to which most Kenyan exporting

companies are certified. The training focused on this social standard (GRASP), which is required by the customers of the participating companies. The training was very successful and enabled participating staff to contextualise customer demand for social compliance and give them the tools to implement operating procedures in their own businesses.

Since the operational launch of the NExT Kenya programme, more than 225 technical assistance and training activities (specific or collective) have been implemented for MSMEs and producer groups. In year 4, 34 technical assistance activities were implemented.

GENDER FOCUS - LAUNCH OF A STRATEGY AND A SPECIFIC ACTION PLAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO GENDER EQUALITY



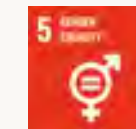
COLEAD departments involved

All

Global and local programmes

All

SDGs



multi-programmes and association

The purpose of COLEAD’s gender strategy and action plan is to provide a framework for operationalising COLEAD’s vision of gender equality by proposing concrete measures and actions for mainstreaming gender in its programmes and activities. Aligned around four key results, the three-year action plan is intended to serve as an internal guide for COLEAD’s headquarters and regional office teams, under the commitment and leadership of COLEAD’s management and Board of Directors.

Outcome 1: Capacity building

The plan includes building the capacity of COLEAD team members and stakeholders to identify, analyse and integrate the gender dimension into processes, procedures and practices.

Outcome 2: Inclusive planning processes

COLEAD is committed to ensuring that planning processes and operational documents take into account the perspectives, interests and needs of partner-beneficiaries, particularly women.

Outcome 3: Improved access to training and information

In order to improve the access of partner-beneficiaries, particularly women, to training, information and innovative sustainable practices, COLEAD will carry out gender analyses of existing training modules, develop/adapt training modules on gender mainstreaming and strengthen the participation and commitment of women.

Outcome 4: Economic empowerment

COLEAD aims to increase the capacity of partner-beneficiaries, particularly women, to access decent jobs and business opportunities along agri-food value chains



PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

The partnership strategy of COLEAD and its programmes aims to improve the effectiveness and increase the impact of its approach and actions to promote the emergence of new generations of private and public actors capable of transforming agriculture into sustainable and inclusive development systems, in order to fully contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The primary objectives of COLEAD's partnerships, through its programmes, therefore have a technical dimension: key collaborations must ensure that technical capacity is commensurate with the association's holistic and complex ambition for a sustainable agricultural sector. We are used to networking and working with stakeholder communities at national, regional and international levels. These collaborations involve some 240 COLEAD partners (apart from programme beneficiary partners and the association's 500 members). Through the implementation of its programmes, COLEAD is at the heart of stakeholder communities involved in the development of more sustainable agriculture in the local and international, public and private sectors.

A WIDE RANGE OF TECHNICAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ENSURE WE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MEET OUR HOLISTIC AMBITION

The following is a non-exhaustive list of partnerships for 2023:

- **Numerous technical partnerships in research and innovation:** through the DeSIRA-LIFT programme (including the Centre for International Agricultural Research, CIRAD; Wageningen; Agrinatura); through the advisory committee of the PretAg (Pesticide Reduction for Tropical Agriculture) initiative, which aims to document, test and implement strategies to reduce pesticide use in the South. The period also saw the launch of new research initiatives on sustainable agriculture: FAO (agroecology), KU Leuven (water use in avocado production), European Commission Joint Research Centre (Quantifying and Improving Soil Health in Africa - AFSOH), Freshfel (carbon footprint initiative - see box). COLEAD has also been working with research institutions on the transition from the Comité Sahélien des Pesticides (CSP) to COAHP (Comité Ouest-Africain d'Homologation des Pesticides- West-African Pesticide Accreditation Board).

COLEAD has already finalised and translated into French, English and Portuguese the 36 framework protocols for conducting efficacy tests for registration under the new system.

- **COLEAD and the Minor Use Foundation** are bringing together farmers, regulators, researchers and crop protection professionals. This is an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and goals of the Minor Use Foundation, but also to strengthen COLEAD's crop protection partnerships with key stakeholders such as PCPB, KEPHIS, ECOWAS, CABI, crop protection manufacturers and the International Biocontrol Manufacturers' Association (IBMA).
- **COLEAD and the African Agribusiness Science Week:** The African Agribusiness Science Week (AASW) is the premier continental platform for all stakeholders involved in agricultural and agribusiness research and innovation in Africa. Every three years, this platform brings together more than 1,500 stakeholders to take stock of progress in research and innovation, share information, network, forge business collaborations and identify priorities for joint action. COLEAD's role at AASW8 supported Expected Outcome 6 of the FFM Plus programme and contributed to AASW8 by co-organising four events, one of which was part of the

- DeSIRA LIFT project.
- **COLEAD regularly collaborates with other international trade organisations** (such as Freshfel, IFOAM, FIBL) and national/sectoral associations (such as the Fresh Produce Consortium, the French Chamber of Importers of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, CSIF, Fresh Trade Belgium, ALFA and organic processing and trade associations). In addition, COLEAD is a founding member of the Global Fresh Produce Coalition, which aims to bring together fresh produce associations from around the world to voice solutions to the disruptions in the global fresh produce supply chain (in particular rising production and transport costs) that are causing serious concern about the sector's ability to supply fresh fruit and vegetables to consumers around the world, thereby contributing to food security and health.
 - **Collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** and the Working Party on Agricultural Commodity Standards of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), two international organisations that establish and promote quality standards for the marketing of fresh and processed fruit and vegetables. The presence of COLEAD, which represents the private sector in the horticultural trade, in these two institutions allows us to follow and participate in the work of creating or modifying standards for horticultural products, as well as presenting studies and new tools to facilitate trade.
 - **Collaboration with FAO: IPPC (FAO) and COLEAD** collaborate closely and regularly on the joint development of e-learning and support to improve plant health in vulnerable countries. FAO and COLEAD also collaborate on the use of the TAPE (agro-ecology) and COQUA (business) tools.
 - **Ongoing engagement with GlobalG.A.P.:** GlobalG.A.P. is the leading set of internationally recognised agricultural standards covering Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), sustainable production, animal welfare, worker health and safety (among others) and is recognised in over 100 countries. GlobalG.A.P. is creating a new Environmental Sustainability Solution (ESS).
 - **NGO Coalition on the Unfair "Trading Practices Directive".** This coalition was formed several years ago during the development of the European Directive and COLEAD has been an active partner. Other members include FTAO, Oxfam, Ifoam and Solidaridad, etc. The group has been reconvened as part of an evaluation of the Directive by the European Commission to assess the extent to which the Directive has achieved its objectives since it came into force. The aim of this group is to provide input to the evaluation, in particular to ensure that the operation of the Directive can be improved to better meet the needs of stakeholders in developing countries.





- **Vanilla from Madagascar and Comoros:** COLEAD worked with partners to avoid a major trade barrier for vanilla trade with the EU by coordinating the different stakeholders (EU importers, exporters in Madagascar, etc.) and facilitating dialogue with the European Commission.
- **COLEAD is a member of the World Banana Forum,** of which GLOBALG.A.P. and Rainforest Alliance are also permanent members. This commitment enables COLEAD to work closely with private standards bodies such as GLOBALG.A.P. and the Rainforest Alliance to ensure that the perspectives and needs of developing countries are represented and taken into account.
- **French Initiative for Sustainable Bananas:** (IFDB): The IFDB was launched by CIRAD at the Paris International Agricultural Show. Driven by a common desire to address the economic, environmental and social challenges facing the industry, the main players in the French banana sector decided to join forces in a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative for sustainable bananas. The IFDB aims to address all aspects of sustainability. COLEAD is a member of the Working Groups on "Value Sharing and Shared Responsibilities" and on "Environmental Sustainability".
- **The dynamism of the PAFO, IICA, OECD and PIFON partnerships** is reflected in the discussions that have taken place through series/workshops and the launch (with PAFO) of Agrinnovators.org, a platform that brings together African entrepreneurs passionate about innovation and sustainability in the agri-food sector (see box).
- **Collaboration with financial institutions:** Discussions have been initiated or continued with a number of financial institutions involved in agricultural finance in low and middle income countries to position COLEAD as a credible technical partner to help MSMEs better access and make the most of finance (e.g. ABSA Bank in Kenya, Kampani, Shared Interest Foundation, Council for Smallholder Access to Finance (CSAF), Investment & Partners (I&P), Samawati Capital Partners, ABC Fund, etc.)
- **Collaboration with ICRA:** This was established to build the capacity of experts and farmer organisations to increase confidence in commercial relationships along value chains. This collaboration will be continued and formalised in the future.
- **Fairmiles consortium:** this new coalition has been established in collaboration with Beanstalk.Global, Blue Skies, COLEAD, the University of Exeter, the University of Northampton and the ODI (Overseas Development Institute) (see box).

CONSOLIDATING AND DIVERSIFYING OUR FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Since 2015, the Association has embarked on a process of diversifying its sources of funding, while consolidating its historic partnership with the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).



TOWARDS FURTHER SYSTEMATISATION AND DIGITALISATION OF OUR ECOSYSTEM

Through the implementation of its programmes, COLEAD is at the heart of the various stakeholder communities in the development of more sustainable agriculture, both locally and internationally, in the public and private sectors. A new categorisation to integrate and segment these communities is currently being studied, particularly in relation to the organisation's technical and financial partners. The aim is to improve the systematisation of all the partnerships represented by these communities in order to ensure that they are monitored and optimised. This approach is also part of the preparation of a new ERP/CRM for the organisation, which should facilitate the dissemination and updating of information provided by COLEAD to all its partners



COLLABORATION WITH FRESHFEL ON METHODS FOR CALCULATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

As part of the work of the Freshfel Environmental Footprint Initiative, Freshfel Europe is developing Product Environmental Footprint Categorisation Rules (PEFCRs) for fruit and vegetables. The aim of these PEFCRs is to provide a standardised methodology (including but not limited to carbon quantification) for the environmental footprint of the fresh produce sector.

COLEAD, through its Fit For Market SPS and Fit For Market+ programmes, has joined the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee representing African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in the development of the PEFCR to be applied to imports into Europe. In particular, COLEAD will ensure that ACP private sector interests are well represented in the development of the PEFCR methodology.

To date, efforts in the fresh produce sector to address product sustainability through the consideration of environmental footprints have been very fragmented. To address this, the PEFCRs will improve the benchmarking and comparison of the environmental footprint of products in the fresh produce category. This will improve the transparency and environmental responsibility of the sector and support communication on the positive environmental aspects of fresh produce consumption.

"Fruit and vegetables is one of the most sustainable food categories. The PEFCR methodology will help the sector to better communicate this as part of the transition to a healthy and sustainable plant-based diet. The whole sector will benefit from PEFCR now and in the future."

Nicola Pisano, Sustainable Development Director, Freshfel Europe

The development of the alternative PEFCR for fruit and vegetables will take two years and will be subject to two public consultations during this period. Once developed, the alternative PEFCR for fruit & vegetables will be available as an open resource for industry-wide use.

11 ONLINE AGRIFOOD PARTNERSHIP SERIES HELD IN 2023 BY COLEAD AND ITS PARTNERS PAFO, OECD AND IICA

COLEAD has developed three series of webinars with the Pan-African Farmers' Organisation (PAFO), the OECD and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The main objective of these sessions is to inspire the international community of agripreneurs through testimonials/success stories covering all current issues and challenges related to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the sector.

In 2023, COLEAD's Networks and Alliances department organised a total of 11 informative and engaging webinar sessions. **44 experienced entrepreneurs and sector experts** were featured in these sessions, which were attended by 2,300 people. A new series will be launched in 2024 with the Pacific Farmers' Organisation (PFO).



22 8 women
14 men



17 11 women
6 men



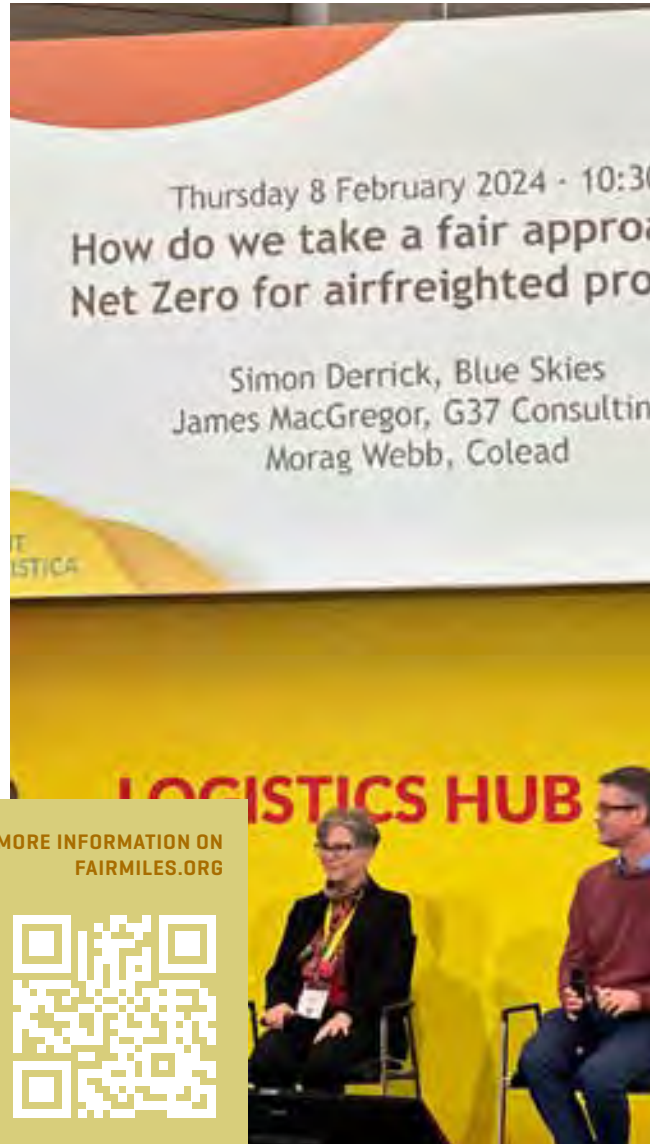
5 2 women
3 men

TOTAL

44 21 women - 48%
23 men - 52%

Number and gender of entrepreneurs presented during sessions organised by COLEAD and its partners in 2023

FAIRMILES.ORG: WORKING TOGETHER FOR GREATER CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE COUNTRIES



In Africa, millions of families saw their livelihoods threatened in 2023 by calls for a ban on fresh produce flown into UK and European supermarkets. In a historical context where: (i) African imports, particularly by air from the EU, far exceed exports, (ii) some fresh produce from Africa is transported on planes carrying European travellers, (iii) Africa represents 18% of the world's population but only 3% of greenhouse gas emissions, (iv) and where producers in Africa are the first victims of climate change.

In this context, and in the context of the just transition advocated by COP 28, the "Fairmiles" consortium seeks to explore how we can adopt a fair "net zero" approach without denying vital market access to producers in developing countries.

The aim of the Fairmiles coalition is to develop a fair and equitable strategy, consistent with the principles of climate justice, to decarbonise the air transport of fresh produce. This approach will enable the industry to make progress towards the 'net zero' goal, while mitigating unforeseen impacts such as the potential loss of livelihoods in developing communities. Overall, the term 'climate justice' refers to the idea that our efforts to address the climate emergency must also take into account the social and economic impacts of these efforts,

particularly in relation to equity, equality and human rights.

Fairmiles is committed to highlighting the importance of maintaining vital trade links with developing countries and making recommendations for reducing emissions without marginalising vulnerable communities. Fairmiles is a collaboration between Beanstalk, Global, Blue Skies, COLEAD, the University of Exeter, the University of Northampton and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The initiative is supported by a consortium of over 15 organisations representing African fresh produce companies, air cargo, academia and the development sector (source: fairmiles.org).

COLEAD's new commitment to a multi-stakeholder partnership illustrates, if proof were required, the need for and value of solid and lasting connections based on human, geographical and economic links, especially between Europe and Africa, to work towards a fairer world in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.



GOVERNANCE

COLEAD is a not-for-profit association (governed by the French law of 1901) created in 1973. As such, COLEAD's governing body is the General Assembly, made up of all the members of the association. As a network of committed companies, professional organisations and experts in more than 50 countries, COLEAD brings together a multi-stakeholder coalition to promote and implement inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems.

COLEAD is governed by a Board of Directors with a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 16 members, half from ACP countries and half from EU countries. Directors are elected by the General Assembly for a three-year term. The Board elects a Bureau from among its members, consisting of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary-General and a Treasurer. The Board delegates the implementation of the activity programmes and budgets to a permanent structure, the General Delegation, headed by an Executive Director appointed by the Board and elected from outside its membership.

The last elections took place at the COLEAD Annual General Meeting on 22 June 2022. Fourteen directors were elected:

- **Chairperson:** Mr Stephen MINTAH, SEA FREIGHT PINEAPPLE EXPORTERS OF GHANA (SPEG, Ghana)
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Mrs Leena MALDE, WEALMOOR LTD. (UK)
- **Secretary General:** Mr Jean-Marie SOP, GIC UNAPAC (Cameroon)
- **Treasurer:** Mr Vincent OMER-DECUGIS, SOCIETE INTERNATIONALE D'IMPORTATION (S.I.I.M, France)
- Mr Gabriel OUIDI, ORGANISATION CENTRALE DES PRODUCTEURS-EXPORTATEURS D'ANANAS ET DE BANANES (OCAB, Côte d'Ivoire)
- Mr Moctar FOFANA, AGRUMES ET OLEAGINEUX DU MALI SARL (AOM, Mali)
- Mr Karim DOSTMOHAMED, FRIGOKEN LTD. (Kenya)
- Mr Hans-Willem VAN DER WAAL, AGRO FAIR BV (The Netherlands)
- Mr Thomas HILDENBRAND, SA SIPEF N.V. (Belgium)
- Mr Volkert ENGELSMAN, EOSTA B.V. (The Netherlands)
- Mr Olivier HERRERA MARIN, FRESAL (France)
- Mr Edouard CHOUBIYI, ROYAL EXIM (Benin)
- Mr Komadou TOZO, GREEN AGRI NOVA (Togo)
- Mrs Virginie TOURE DE BAGLION DE LA DUFFERIE, SOCIETE GUINEENNE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE (Guinea)

In 2023, two directors left their companies and therefore the Board: Mrs Gorete PINTO TEIXEIRA (CAPEXO) France and Mr Damien CASTAGNIER (PRONATURA SAS) France.

WORKING COMMITTEES

For several years now, the General Delegation and the Board of Directors of COLEAD have been setting up working committees to deal with strategic and cross-cutting of the Association. Following the Board meeting and the General Assembly in June 2023, 4 committees have been set up.

- Advocacy Committee
- Governance Committee
- Marketing Committee
- Networks Committee

The main themes on which the Working Committees worked and made progress in 2023 were as follows:

- Policy Coherence for the Development of the Most Vulnerable Low and Middle Income Countries
- COLEAD's gender strategy and action plan (+ youth inclusion)
- The regional and local anchorage of the association
- Changes in the nature of membership
- Organisation and management of the association's networks
- COLEAD's "glocal" marketing



HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY!

COLEAD celebrated its 50th anniversary on 1 December 2023 in Brussels with 120 partners, directors, former DGs of the association, team members and friends of COLEAD, and with more than 200 members of the association who met for the occasion in 25 countries, from Africa to the Caribbean and the Pacific. "A perfect illustration of the COLEAD network," said Jeremy KNOPS, DG of COLEAD, in his speech.

50 years ago, COLEAMA was born at the 46th Brussels International Fair as a committee of horticultural traders from African countries, Madagascar and the 6 countries of the European Economic Community (EEC). In 1976, COLEAMA became the Comité de Liaison Europe Afrique Caraïbes Pacifique (COLEACP) under the visionary leadership of its first Director General, Mr Libert Bou. Mr Bou, a senior civil servant, was appointed by General de Gaulle to move Les Halles de Paris from the centre of Paris to Rungis.

On 1 December 2023, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of COLEAD in Brussels, with over 200 members in 25 ACP countries. It was a warm and wonderful occasion to pay tribute to those who have shaped the history of the organisation: our historic partners - the European Union and OACPS, represented on this occasion by Leonard Mizzi and Junior Lodge respectively; Albert Delhomme, a founding member of COLEAMA; Catherine

Guichard and Guy Stinglhamber, former General Delegates of the Association. We thank them once again for their kind words.

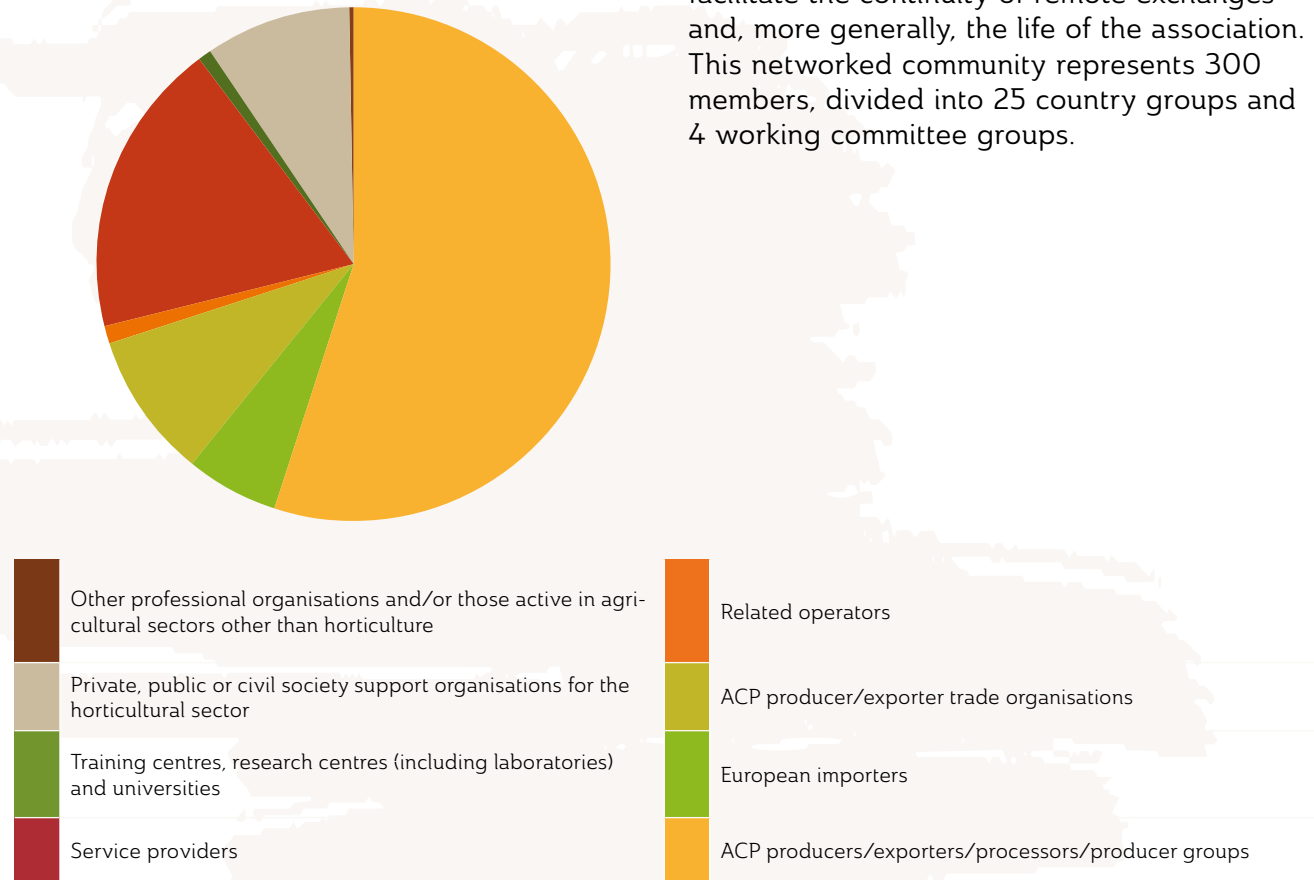
Stephen Mintah, current President of COLEAD, and Virginie Touré, Director, accompanied by Jeremy Knops, current Executive Director, took turns to pay tribute to the work carried out. In particular, they paid tribute to the commitment of the members and the international team of men and women who make up COLEAD, as well as to its key partners, most recently AFD, ENABEL and the WTO through the STDF.

The 50th anniversary of our organisation was not only a celebration of the association's past (COLEAMA, COLEACP), but also a salute to the future that we are building together from a lasting legacy in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and beyond, with over 140 partner countries today.

After all, COLEACP is 50 years old, but COLEAD is only one year old. So, as all the guests proclaimed on this highly symbolic anniversary: Happy 50th birthday and long live COLEAD!

MEMBERSHIP

The Association has 497 members, broken down as follows:

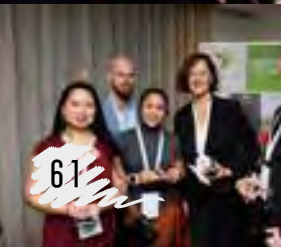
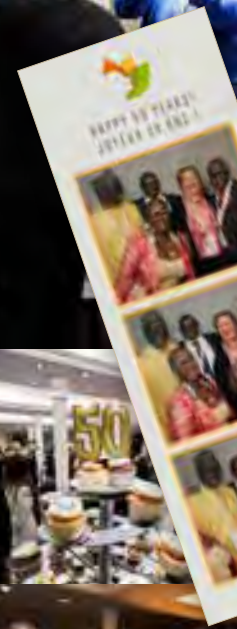


In 2023, a WhatsApp community was created by country and by working committee to facilitate the continuity of remote exchanges and, more generally, the life of the association. This networked community represents 300 members, divided into 25 country groups and 4 working committee groups.

JOYEUX 50 ANS ! HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY!

COLEACP 1973-2023 COLEAD





COLEAD TEAM 2023



Adegboyega David
SODADE



Alexandra
WAFFLARD



Alice
**JACQUES DE
DIXMUDE**



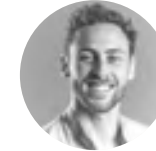
Amalia
**BANGUERO
COLLAZOS**



Axelle
RUPERT



Bénédicte
WERNER



Brice
MOUREAU



Bruce
CHEMJOR



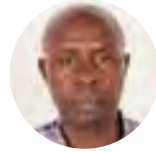
Camille
DE WERGIFOSSE



Carine
KARUHIJE



Carolina
OTERO



Chagema
KEDERA



Chloé
VIERENDEELS



Chris
DOWNES



Debora
ADOSSI



Delanyo
ADENKA



Denis
FELICITE-ZULMA



Dorothée
VANDELEENE



Edouard
LEHMANN



Edouard
CHOUBIYI



Elena
THIEL



Emely
RAMIREZ



Emmanuel
BOURCELET



Emmanuelle
PRUNIER



Florian
LE HUNG



Francis
NIAGNE



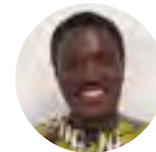
Frédéric Le Roi
ABALO



Gabriel
OUIDI



Gaetan
DERMIEN



Gérard
GNANGA



Gisèle
MIZERO



Griffin
KAIGA



Gnissa Victor
BORO



Hans-Willem
VAN DER WALL



Inès
BASTOS



Ingrid
MORVAN



Isolina
BOTO



Jean-Marie
SOP



Jeremy
KNOPS



Karim
DOSTMOHAMED



Kelvin
WACHIRA MAINA



Koen
VANDERHAEGEN



Komabou
TOZO



Laïssa
KAYITANA



Laura
WAUTERS



Laurence
REKK



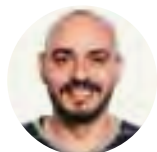
Leena
MALDE



Lilian
MURIUKI



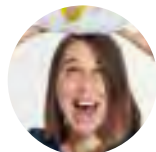
Mafalda
DE ALBUQUERQUE



Marco
DIAZ



Margaux
MUYLE



Marian
RENKENS



Marie-Hélène
KESTEMONT



Martin
VAN BRAKEL



Marygoretti
**GACHAGUA
KAMAU**



Maud
DELACOLLETTE



Merlene
ODERO



Moctar
FOFANA



Morag
WEBB



Nour
SADDOD



Nursel
GUMUSBOGA



Olivier
HERRERA MARIN



Pieterjan
DE BAUW



Peter
NGOGA



Sandra
ATINO



Sandra
BORMA



Sebastian
MARINO COTO



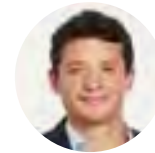
Simotwo
ZAINABU



Soline
MALBURET



Stephen
MINTAH



Thomas
CHEVALIER
MENDES LOPES



Thomas
HILDENBRAND



Tracy
McGEE



Vanessa
SIEG



Vincent
CALLOUD



Vincent
OMER-DECUGIS



Virginie
TOURE DE BAGLION
DE LA DUFFERIE



Volkert
ENGELSMAN



Weiting
YAO



Wester
SCHEPERS





FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

COLEAD is guided by the principles of rigorous and prudent financial management. This approach is not only to ensure the smooth running of the association, but also to fully respect the purpose of our associative mission and to maintain total transparency in all our actions. While ensuring that our budget is balanced, we are committed to sound and balanced management of our programmes and other activities of the Association. Our priority is to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our actions while respecting our financial commitments.

The association's accounts are audited annually by the expert accountancy practice, Caderas Martin. COLEAD is also subject to the expenditure control requirements imposed by our funding bodies as part of the implementation of programmes for which grants have been received.



EXTRACT FROM THE AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

"In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets and liabilities and the financial position of the Association as at 31 December 2023 and of the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting rules applicable in France."

Paris, June 2024
The Statutory Auditors
Caderas Martin

MANAGEMENT REPORT

It is important to bear in mind that 2023, like 2022, was a period of transition for the organisation. Indeed, this year has been marked by the administrative and financial closure of the FFM SPS programme and the acceleration of the implementation of the FFM Plus and AGRINFO programmes.

Transitional years are generally very delicate and complex to manage due to the simultaneous technical and administrative requirements and the overlapping of different technical implementation rhythms. One of the main challenges was to manage the increased pace of technical implementation of the programmes while ensuring the proper administrative and financial closure of the FFM SPS programme.

The level of activity resulted in grant income of EUR 9.5 million, compared to EUR 10.2 million in the previous year. The year 2023 was again characterised by an increase in costs linked to inflation, partly due to the

automatic indexation of salaries for staff based in Belgium.

In addition, there was a slight reduction in the volume of technical activities carried out due to the technical completion of the FFM SPS programme during the year, combined with the gradual operationalisation of the FFM Plus and AGRINFO programmes (launched at the beginning of 2023), which have not yet reached their full implementation rate at this stage. This reduction in the volume of technical activities therefore has a direct impact on the reduction in the operating costs borne by the programmes. However, this reduction in the financial resources linked to the subsidies for the projects/programmes under management was partially offset by the recognition of the operating subsidy linked to BELSPO.

These factors resulted in a net operating profit of EUR 95,001, in line with the previous financial year (i.e. EUR 91,290 for the 2022

financial year). In terms of net profit, the 2023 financial year shows a profit after tax of EUR 62,016. This positive result will be allocated to the association's retained earnings.

It should be noted that the combination of these factors has led to complications in cash management in the first half of 2023, due in particular - but not exclusively - to the significant pre-financing of COLEAD in the context of the FFM SPS programme (EUR 1,779,875 at the end of December 2022). However, the contingency measures put in place have ensured that the identified cash flow risk has not materialised and that the technical implementation of the activities planned under the various projects/programmes can continue.

Balance sheet at 31 December 2023

ASSETS			LIABILITIES		
EUR	2023	2022	EUR	2023	2022
Fixed assets	45 034	36 440	Shareholders' equity	877 000	816 535
Current assets	5 364 717	6 614 505	Provisions for liabilities and charges	20 495	35 102
			Short and long-term debt	4 512 257	5 799 308
Total assets	5 409 751	6 650 945	Total liabilities	5 409 751	6 650 945

Financial statements 2023

SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT FOR 2023 (EUR)		
	2023	2022
Operating income	9 571 259	10 259 316
Operating expenses	(9 476 259)	(10 168 026)
Operating profit	95,001	91 290
Financial result	(3,241)	(4 028)
Exceptional items	(29,744)	(137 837)
Income tax	-	-
Net profit for the year	62,015	(50 576)





The information and views expressed in this annual report are those of COLEAD and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders of its programmes. The use of specific country or territory designations does not imply any judgement on the part of COLEAD concerning the legal status of such countries or territories, their authorities and institutions, or the delimitation of their borders. The mention of specific company or product names (whether or not registered) does not imply any intention to infringe proprietary rights. Please note that some of the content of this report has been produced using artificial intelligence technology. All ideas, content and cases presented are original, and content generated by artificial intelligence has been carefully vetted and validated by COLEAD.



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