

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY ON EUROPEAN UNION MARKET ACCESS TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO TEN FIRMS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

1. BACKGROUND

1.01 The Dominican Republic (DR) is an upper middle-income country with a small, open economy that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Economic performance has traditionally been driven by manufacturing and agriculture, although recent decades have seen a shift toward services and extractive activities. The degree of trade openness¹ in the economy is 54%, and tourism and free trade zones account for nearly 70% of its total exports. The majority (80%) of the DR population, estimated at 10.2 million, lives in urban areas².

1.02 Since the mid-2000s, the agro-food sector has accounted for 10% of Gross Domestic Product and is the third-largest employer in the DR (9.5%) after commercial services and manufacturing. The majority of producers are smallholders. The average size of a farm is six hectares and approximately 71% of producers cultivate a farm smaller than four hectares. Crop activities account for 63% of output, followed by livestock activities (20%) and both crop and livestock activities (16.3%)³. Agriculture expansion has benefited from both organic and greenhouse production, with 8.7% of agricultural land devoted to organic production. The DR is the world's largest producer of organic cocoa (153,000 hectares) and organic bananas (20,350 hectares), representing more than 30% of organic cocoa and 55% of organic banana production globally. Between 2004 and 2017, agricultural production in greenhouses grew from 200,000 square meters to ten million square meters⁴.

1.03 Food processing is also the largest and the fastest-growing manufacturing sector in the DR. In 2018, with USD3.5 billion of total value-added, the entire sector contributed to 40% of total manufacturing value-added in the country. In addition, with 135,000 employees it also accounts for 26% of total employment in manufacturing. During 2007–2018, food processing output grew at 4.7% on average, faster than local manufacturing and free trade zone manufacturing at 3.6% and 3.1%, respectively.

¹ Trade openness refers to the orientation of a country's economy in the context of international trade and is usually measured by the total sum of imports and exports as a ratio to a country's GDP.

² Dominican Republic IDB Group Country Strategy 2017-2020

³ NEC (2015), VI Censo Nacional Agropecuario: Actividades Pecuarias, Prácticas y Servicios Agropecuarios, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, http://www.inec.go.cr/sites/default/files/documentos-biblioteca-virtual/reagropeccenagro2014-tiii-008_0.pdf ONE (2016), Precenso Nacional Agropecuario 2015, <https://cenagro.one.gob.do/index.php/documentos-de-consulta/Documentos%20de%20consulta/Precenso%20Nacional%20Agropecuario%202015%20Informe%20final/detail> (accessed on 15 May 2020).

⁴ ITC/IISD/FiBL (2018), The State of Sustainable Markets 2018: Statistics and Emerging Trends, International Trade Centre, <http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/Sustainability%202018%20layout-FIN-web2.pdf>. FAO (2017), The Future of Food and Agriculture: Trends and Challenges, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6583e.pdf>.

1.04 Compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS)⁵ standards is a major and continuing constraint to increased market access for the DR agro-food⁶ exports in key markets such as the United States of America (US) and the EU. For fresh produce accessing the US, a 2015 World Bank Trade Competitiveness Diagnostic assessment found the DR had a higher import refusal rate than neighbouring countries in the US market. When all countries exporting to the US are taken into account, the DR trade compliance performance is classified as poor. The report further found that import refusals are not a problem only with small exporters but rather a relatively widespread issue especially in the fresh fruits and vegetables sector.

1.05 In the case of EU market access, fruit and vegetable exports from the DR have been repeatedly banned by the European port health authorities. This is mostly the result of produce exceeding Maximum Residue Limits (MRL)⁷ within International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures, specifically EU Council Directive Ref. 2000/29/EC⁸, and EU Commission Implementing Directive Ref. 2014/78/EU⁹. As a result of audits performed by the DR's Food and Veterinary Office in 2010, 2012 and 2015, a National Action Plan to improve compliance with EU SPS requirements was developed and implemented. This primarily included the introduction of some post-harvest treatments and pre-export inspections for selected vegetables being exported to the EU. Efforts have also been made to improve inspectors' qualifications and performance at inspection facilities. While these measures have led to a significant decrease in the number of notifications (77 stopped shipments in 2019 down from 143 in 2018) the number of notifications remains comparatively high. During the period 2015–2019, the DR had the fourth-highest number of notifications and containers rejected for non-compliance with respective SPS measures by the US and EU. Comparatively, the DR receives one notification per US\$7.1 million in exports, while Costa Rica receives one per US\$30 million, Honduras one per US\$41.9 million, Ecuador one per US\$53.5 million, and Chile one per US\$182 million¹⁰. The remaining challenges as identified in the last EU audit related to deficiencies in record-keeping (traceability); weaknesses in the value chain—including labelling and packaging standards and product quality assurance certifications—especially for bell peppers and eggplants (which are primarily grown in green houses); and lack of access to, or knowledge

⁵ SPS measures that governments apply to protect human, animal, or plant life or health from risks arising from the entry or spread of pests, from plant- or animal-borne pests or diseases, or from additives, contaminants, toxins, or disease-causing organisms in foods, beverages, or feedstuffs. Article 20 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) allows governments to act on trade in order to protect human, animal or plant life or health, provided they do not discriminate or use this as disguised protectionism. In addition, there are two specific WTO agreements dealing with food safety and animal and plant health and safety, and with product standards in general. These are the WTO Agreement on SPS measures and the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

⁶ Defined here as both fresh produce and manufactured/value-added products.

⁷ CODEX ALIMENTAR US international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice defines the maximum residue limit (MRL) as the highest level of a pesticide residue that is legally tolerated in or on food or feed when pesticides are applied correctly in accordance with Good Agricultural Practice.

⁸ Council Directive 2000/29/EC - <https://www.ecolex.org/details/legislation/council-directive-200029ec-on-protective-measures-against-the-introduction-into-the-community-of-organisms-harmful-to-plants-or-plant-products-and-against-their-spread-within-the-community-lex-faoc034825/>

⁹ Commission Implementing Directive 2014/78/EU amending Annexes I, II, III, IV and V to Council Directive 2000/29/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32014L0078>

¹⁰ Data on health notifications come from the United States Department of Agriculture, the European Union Notification System for Plant Health Interceptions – EUROPHYT and the RASFF - Food and Feed Safety Alerts of the European Union.

of SPS requirements for EU markets. Bell peppers, hot peppers, eggplants, bitter gourd¹¹ and mangoes are the top five products affected, with the EU banning exports of bitter gourd altogether.

1.06 In the case of food-processing, small firms continue to be constrained in accessing international markets due to their lack of certified safety management systems such as Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Global Good Agricultural Practice¹².

Greenhouse Farming in DR.

1.07 In order to facilitate the expansion of greenhouse farming, GODR has been providing special incentives for agricultural production under greenhouses in the municipalities of San Juan, Bohechío, El Cercado, Juan de Herrera, Las Matas de Farfán and Vallejuelo. Greenhouse farmers in these regions have formed associations and cooperatives to facilitate the sharing of production resources and the collective marketing and export of their produce so as to reduce their reliance on intermediaries or so-called middlemen. The collective membership of the Asociación de Exportadores de Vegetales Orientales de La Vega; Asociación de Productores Hortícolas del Valle de Constanza; Asociación de Productores en Ambiente Controlado de La Sierra; Asociación de Productores de Invernadero de San José de Ocoa; and the Cluster de Productores de Invernadero de Jarabacoa represent more than 60% of greenhouse vegetable production in the DR. The associations function as cooperatives and to date have established seedling production facilities (with the support of GODR) to supply farmers with replanting material; facilitated training in good agricultural practices and provided technical assistance to farmers seeking to develop quality assurance systems. All four associations are desirous of supporting the export of produce from their membership which would reduce the need for other intermediaries and improve returns to the farmers. A major challenge however is the absence of cold storage which contributes to diminished quality of highly perishable produce and avoidable post-harvest losses. Equally the absence of a traceability system¹³ precludes access to EU and other key markets.

Export Promotion and Food Security.

1.08 The responsibility to develop policies for the sustainable and competitive development of the agrofood industry falls across different ministries and agencies. The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2010–2030 (Law 1/2012), led by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development defines the guiding principles for medium and long-term support to the agricultural sector. Increased financing and technical assistance for farmers and producers are the main policy levers for increasing the quality of local production and promoting exports. As a complement to the NDS, the Ministry of Agriculture is leading the sustainable agriculture agenda that prioritises export promotion and food security outlined in the Strategic Agricultural Development Plan 2010–2020. The strategic

¹¹ Also known as bitter melon in the English-speaking Caribbean and sopropo in Suriname.

¹² Global GAP is a farm assurance program, translating consumer requirements into Good Agricultural Practice. The standard was developed using the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) guidelines published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and is governed according to the ISO/IEC 17065 for product certification schemes

¹³ Traceability is a system in which fruits and vegetables can be traced from the field to the buyer by lot through unique codes.

plan is built around three main objectives: increasing productivity and competitiveness; promoting agricultural exports; and strengthening self-sufficiency.

1.09 VICOMEX manages the implementation of all international trade agreements and has assumed direct responsibility for advancing the EPA implementation process. VICOMEX serves as a focal point for private and public sectors on issues related to the application of international trade agreements. It is the authority with the power to coordinate with other governmental institutions and trade partners on matters related to the management and implementation of commitments from trade agreements signed by the country. Hence, VICOMEX is responsible for all general and technical issues that lead to the timely and adequate application of trade EPA.

1.10 ADOEXPO is a not-for-profit public-private alliance created in 1972 by Presidential Decree No. 2374, to promote the export sector and develop the strategies necessary for the promotion of Dominican exports. ADOEXPO, is comprised of 290 exporters, mainly small and medium-sized enterprises within a wide range of sectors from fresh products, to agro-industrial, and services. It has evolved as the premier institution in the country for the promotion, defense and orientation of the export sector, including contributions toward the development of export policies of the DR. ADOEXPO also plays a relevant role in capacity building, conducting regular training sessions, diplomas, seminars, courses and workshops on issues of importance to the export sector.

1.11 VICOMEX and ADOEXPO in collaboration with the Dominican Agribusiness Board (Junta Agroempresarial Dominicana JAD) have undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at: (1) improving the ecosystem for food safety; and (2) enhancing market access for agri-produce. They endeavour to work together to collect information to identify the needs of exporters and establish the measures and solutions that allow them to take advantage of opportunities in the international export market.

2. OBJECTIVES OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

2.1 The main objective of this consultancy is to provide training and technical assistance to ten firms for the implementation of food safety management systems to access the EU market.

3. SCOPE OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES.

3.1 The Consulting Firm (the consultant) is required to undertake all the necessary actions to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project in a timely manner, with the supervision of the Project Coordinator. The tasks will include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Conduct desktop research on Food Safety Management Systems required for market access in the European Union.
- (b) Conduct a gap analysis at each of the ten firms and identify non-conformities in relation to GAP/HACCP.
- (c) Prepare a gap analysis and implementation plan for each firm which provides a detailed action plan for closing observed gaps.

- (d) Design and deliver training for the firms. This will include awareness raising and
- (e) Monitor and guide implementation of the gap analysis and implementation plan for each firm.
- (f) Provide templates and other documentation to each firm and advise on the preparation of HACCP documentation such as manuals, policies and procedures, work instructions and checklists.
- (g) Review all prepared quality management documentation, advise on revisions, and provide technical assistance to firms during the implementation phase, as appropriate.
- (h) Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation framework to help measure and provide evidence-base change post implementation of the consultancy.
- (i) Prepare a Final Report, which analyses the progress of the participating firms towards GAP/HACCP; the learning achieved; and recommendation for additional actions to realise the planned results of the assignment.

4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

4.1 The Consultant will report to the Project Coordinator and will be required to submit/deliver the following in Spanish and English:

Deliverables	When
An Inception Report containing a detailed work plan, implementation plan and draft training plan.	Two weeks after commencement of assignment.
Draft Training Manual and all supporting documents for the workshops.	Six weeks after commencement of assignment.
Prepare gap analysis reports and implementation plans for firms.	Eight weeks after commencement of assignment.
Revised Training Manual (after review by the executing agency).	Seven weeks after commencement of assignment.
Quarterly reports detailing progress made by firms with the implementation of GAP/HACCP on Gap Analysis and Implementation Plan.	12 weeks after commencement of assignment.
Support to firms in the implementation of the quality standards.	20 weeks after commencement of assignment.
Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation framework to help measure and provide evidence-base change post implementation of the consultancy.	21 weeks after commencement of assignment.
Prepare and submit Final Report.	Within 12 months of commencing the assignment.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 The consultant will undertake the tasks related to this assignment in a maximum of 100 days over a period of 12 months and should report to the Project Coordinator.

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

6.1 The consulting firm should appoint a key expert with the following qualifications:

- (a) A higher-level diploma or equivalent qualifications in agriculture, with specialization on food and trade standards and production processes.
- (b) A higher-level diploma or equivalent qualifications in business administration, international negotiations, economics, or a discipline related to the project is also desirable.
- (c) Experience in the food safety standards and the promotion of commerce. Experience in agricultural and / or agro-processing industry, or related agro-industry cluster is desirable.
- (d) Excellent command of written and spoken English and Spanish.
- (e) Proven Experience (ten years) in training for quality and safety standards implementation specifically HACCP.
- (f) Proven Experience in training for market access related issues.