

CWA Technical Seminars

Concept Note

Strategic investment planning for resilient agrifood systems

Background/ Introduction (250 – 300 words)

The agrifood sector in the Caribbean region faces multiple interconnected challenges and risks but also holds the potential to spur growth, improve livelihoods and improve access to nutritious food. Along the supply chains, from production to transport infrastructure, economic activity is challenged by extreme weather events, reduced rainfall and rising temperatures. The Caribbean remains a net food importing region with a low level of intra-regional trade. At the same time, there is scope for expanding sustainably agrifood production and trade and build resilience in the sector, benefitting both farmers, consumers and governments. Accounting for roughly one quarter of the non-oil economy, the agriculture sector is projected to grow by 10.4% in 2024 (IDB, 2024), presenting important opportunities for contributing to development objectives. CARICOM member countries are actively working to reduce import dependency through the "25 by 2025" initiative, which aims to cut the region's food imports by 25% by 2025. This effort focuses on boosting local agricultural production, enhancing food security, and strengthening regional economic resilience.

To boost agrifood sector competitiveness and climate resilience, sound supporting policies across various domains and more and better investments are needed. Investments in knowledge transfer, digital technologies, early warning/information systems and critical infrastructure (roads, maritime transport and irrigation, among others) are of particular importance.

Prioritization, strategic investment planning and evidence-based policy are crucial for better the use of scarce public resources, guiding them towards actions with highest returns in terms of growth, incomes, food security and sustainability. Moreover, creating an enabling environment for private investments to thrive is paramount for closing the financing gap in agriculture, where the needs are exacerbated by climate risks.

Objectives (100 – 150 words)

The objective is to reflect collectively on what needs to be done differently to stimulate and facilitate more and better investments in the agrifood sector. Specifically:

- What kind of public and private investments can help the agrifood sector in the Caribbean countries to withstand the shocks and innovate?
- What approaches, methodologies and tools can be used for policy analysis, better investment planning and creating an enabling environment for private sector?

Target Audience

- Government officials and regional public institutions
- Financial Institutions (international, regional and national)
- Farmer organizations and agribusinesses (SMEs)
- Development partners
- Research Institutions

Proposed Agenda of Seminar

A roundtable with four speakers and an open dialogue:

Time	Speaker	Topic
7 min	introduction by the facilitator (<i>FAO Investment Centre - TBC</i>)	Objective and structure of the session
7 min	Representative from a Ministry of Agriculture (<i>depending on who will come to the CWA: Jamaica and Guyana would be good options – FAO-SLC to advise please</i>)	Faced with multiple challenges, how do policy makers prioritize investments in the sector and what evidence do they use for this?
7 min	Representative from the World Bank	<i>To be proposed by the WB.</i> Initial proposal: What instruments does the Bank have to enable countries to invest more in resilience of agrifood systems?
7 min	Representative of the Caribbean Agri-Business Association (CABA) or a national farmer organization / agribusiness association (<i>FAO-SLC to advise please</i>)	How can producers' efforts to achieve more sustainable and remunerative agriculture be supported through targeted investments?
7 min	Representative of CARICOM (<i>Joseph Cox, Assistant Secretary-General, Economic Integration, Innovation and Development. Alternatively: Shaun Baugh, CARICOM Programme Manager, Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Development or Milagro Matus, Deputy Programme Manager</i>)	What can the Caribbean countries do collectively to reduce risks in agrifood systems, enhance trade and make agriculture thrive?
15 min	Follow-up questions to the panel	
35 min	Open discussion with seminar participants	
5 min	Closing remarks by the facilitator	

Budget