



Grenada looks to upgrade its seamoss and soursop sectors

A range of stakeholders from Grenada met to establish a path for upgrading their seamoss and soursop value chains over the coming years

May 31, 2023 - Bridgetown, Barbados – Seamoss and soursop were the highlights of discussions by some 30 stakeholders from Grenada, including, farmers, fishers, exporters, processors, and representatives from various agencies of government.



During the week of May 22, 2023, these private and public sector stakeholders met face to face in Grenada to assess the country's seamoss and soursop value chains with the aim of increasing their export potential. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) facilitated two value chain assessment workshops on each commodity, featuring presentations by production experts and exporters, plenary and group discussions. These discussions aimed to develop an Upgrading Strategy and Action Plan to transform both value chains into sustainable, competitive, and lucrative industries.

The stakeholders examined some of the opportunities and constraints within the seamoss and soursop value chains and the steps necessary to address potential challenges. By examining the

areas of marketing, production, costs of production, the mid-supply chain, and sustainability, the stakeholders were able to draft a preliminary upgrading strategy, which will be fine-tuned and validated over the coming months. The strategy and its subsequent action plan will help all stakeholders to effectively collaborate on increasing the efficiency and profitability of seamoss and soursop production and will help address areas such as climate smart practices, and women and youth participation.

Mr Juan Cheaz Pelaez, FAO Trade and Markets Officer for the Caribbean and Lead Technical Officer for the project remarked that, “we are using a market-driven approach to strengthen the seamoss and soursop value chains and in so doing we hope to catalyze private sector investment. It is an approach that requires all stakeholders to engage effectively and collaborate so that the country can increase its production and improve livelihoods. The efforts seek to increase the export potential of the two products, while helping to reduce imports, in line with the CARICOM 25 percent by 2025 reduction in the food import bill”.

Grenada remains the only country in the Caribbean region with the approval to export the fresh soursop fruit to the United States of America. Within this context, Mr Benson Aldridge, Exporter and Chairperson of the Grenada Exporters Association of Fresh Produce shared that soursop is a very important commodity for the island. He added that “the assessment has allowed us to be better equipped to take steps in increasing production and marketing of fresh soursop, especially for the American market.” He noted that he looks forward to “additional training and action to help in developing the industry so that the country can meet the demands of markets, like that of the US, and be able to sustain these markets.”

Similarly, Mr Jude Hector, Executive Director of Adult and Teen Challenge Grenada and who is leading a steering committee for the registration of a Grenada Commercial Seamoss Farmers Association, remarked, “the workshop was very engaging and relevant to our plans for the development of Grenada’s seamoss industry. Only a collective approach like this would ensure our success. Thanks to the FAO for facilitating this workshop and for their commitment to our long-term success”.

The strengthening of these high potential value chains remains crucial to the Government of Grenada as they work to rebuild their agriculture sector.

Mr Aaron Francois, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Fisheries and Cooperatives noted that the “seamoss and soursop value chains hold tremendous opportunity for generating increased foreign exchange earnings through exports and creating greater amounts of sustainable livelihoods in the agriculture sector. The government’s transformational agenda for agriculture calls for greater structure and organization within those agricultural value chains that show great potential for generating greater economic growth”. He concluded that “the Ministry commits to working with the stakeholders to implement the

strategies identified for the upgrading and development of the seamoss and soursop value chains”.

These Value Chain Assessment Workshops fall under a project of FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme on promoting competitive, sustainable, and resilient national value chain development in Grenada and build on the work of other FAO initiatives to support seamoss and soursop production. Activities under this project will run for two years, over which time the Upgrading Strategy and Action Plan will be implemented and led by a national body of value chain stakeholders from the private and public sectors to encourage the sustainability of both sectors for years to come.

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