



CARIFORUM-EU EPA

A Partnership that Counts



Promoting Sustainability in the Trade in Agricultural and Fisheries Products in the CARIFORUM- EU Partnership

One of the core objectives of the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is to support the efforts of the CARIFORUM States and the EU to achieve sustainable development. There are various commitments in the Agreement which reference this objective. One important provision is Article 37 of the Agreement which highlights the importance of the EPA in contributing to increasing the trade in agricultural and fisheries products in both traditional and non-traditional sectors, consistent with the sustainable management of resources.

For its part, within its internal legal order, the EU has adopted policy measures that can contribute to the achievement of this objective. The European Green Deal implemented since 2020, comprises policies and activities to achieve the goal of sustainability and aims to make the European economy sustainable and climate neutral by 2050. The action plan also includes a "[Farm to Fork Strategy](#)" that aims to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly. In order to ensure sustainability throughout the whole supply chain, the European Union is taking steps to ensure that the concept of sustainability becomes an important component of its bilateral trade relationships. For this reason, the EU is seeking to deepen this aspect of the CARIFORUM-EU partnership.

In implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Commission (the "Commission") has already lowered pesticide residue limits and bans pesticides that negatively affect human health. For example, in 2020, there were in excess of fifty changes made to the EU legislation on Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). Imported food must adhere to MRL limits. This means that farmers in the CARIFORUM States whose products are exported to the EU need to closely monitor the ongoing reviews of pesticides that are relevant for their products.

Another aim of the Farm to Fork strategy is to increase organic farming within Europe. The goal is for at least 25% of Europe's agricultural land to be organically farmed by 2030. To achieve this, the

Commission is developing an Action Plan for organic farming. The adoption of the Action Plan should promote an increase in the overall consumption of organic foods in the territory of the EU.

According to the Centre for Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI), organic food accounts for approximately 2% of all European food imports with tropical fruits, nuts and spices having the highest import share. The promotion of organic food in the EU offers a significant opportunity for agricultural producers in the CARIFORUM States that wish to and have the capacity to increase their EU market presence. These stakeholders should take action to change cultivation methods where possible, in order to become organically certified. Relatedly, **for example, Caribbean Export is assisting a coffee and cocoa producer from Haiti to achieve organic ECO certification viz: ISO 2451 standard, ECOCERT certification and JAS – Cocoa beans – Specifications and quality requirements, established by the International Organization standardization (ISO).**

Article 41 of the EPA commits the CARIFORUM States and the EU to exchanging information and engaging in consultations on matters which can be of benefit to the CARIFORUM States with respect to the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices and promoting organic farming. They have agreed that dialogue would be particularly beneficial in areas such as:

- (a) The policy and institutional changes needed to underpin the transformation of the agricultural and fisheries sectors;
- (b) Promoting investment in CARIFORUM agricultural, food and fisheries sectors; and
- (c) New technologies, policies and measures related to the quality of agricultural and fisheries products.

CARIFORUM can use the framework of Article 41 to engage with the EU on the development of measures to support the further development and modernization of agricultural systems within the CARIFORUM region.

Economic Partnership Agreement Unit, CARIFORUM Directorate