FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN-PACIFIC HORTICULTURAL INDUSTRY

PIP provides assistance on the basis of demand and according to cost-sharing principles. To access support, beneficiaries must complete an application form which is evaluated against a series of eligibility criteria as well as national/regional priorities.

For more information on PIP, including details on how to access support from the programme, please refer to the website:

www.coleacp.org/pip

Alternatively, contact us on:

PIP
C/O COLEACP
130, rue du Trône
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 508 10 90
Fax: +32 (0)2 514 06 32
E-mail: pip@coleacp.org

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**COLEACP: an international resource for the horticultural trade**

COLEACP (Cotonou-Afrique-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee) was established in 1973 as a not-for-profit inter-professional association that represents and defends the collective interests of ACP producers/exporters and EU importers of fruit, vegetables, flowers and plants. Its goal is to facilitate the flow of trade between ACP countries and the EU. It was important to ensure good practices, strengthening competitiveness, and lobbying and advocacy on behalf of the industry. Since 2001, COLEACP has been entrusted by the European Commission (DGIE) to manage the PIP Programme as well as the EU Food Safety Programme (FSP). PIP supports the establishment of horticultural trade and food safety systems for export products in ACP countries in line with regional, international and EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulations.

The evolution of PIP

During the late 1990s, COLEACP became aware that the new EU food safety regulations were having a profound impact on ACP exporters. The Association worked with the major stakeholders to develop a programme to support the floundering ACP exporters and ensure they were able to comply with the new regulations. The ACP Secretariat and EU supported development of this programme to COLEACP, and PIP was launched in 2001. It was funded by the European Commission through the Development Fund to the tune of 14.2 million euros, and operated for the first 5 years in 26 ACP countries.

The driver behind PIP was the need to change EU legislation, but the reality is that the programme addresses not only the desire of buyers to buy “private” standards. These often times more complex and stringent than the regulations, and though not a legal requirement, were becoming mandatory in the horticultural trade. For PIP to work, ACP exporters must understand the new regulations and be responsive to change.

The scope of PIP activities therefore evolved to respond to the changing pressures faced by ACP exporters. Over the next 14 years, the programme, which is now called PIP Africa (PIP), has had a number of phases.

**New market requirements**

At close of PIP Phase 1, ACP exporters faced additional challenges. On the one hand there were new EU food safety regulations that may influence the future availability of plant protection products. Moreover, the market itself is changing. It is increasingly global and the consumer is interested in different demands on suppliers. Growing concerns with climate change has caused attention to food miles, and the onus is now on the horticultural trade, the ACP-EU food producer trade into the spotlight. A number of EU supermarkets are labelling or freighted produce and promoting “local” produce. In the same vein, consumers have become more interested in the social impact of the goods they buy and some retailer brands are going beyond quality and food safety messages on their labels to include adequate information about fair trade, extraneous trade and food miles. ACP exporters and produce buyers need to be in line and adapt to these new challenges. They need a capacity to defend their produce, especially in these markets. For example, in recent years ACP exporter to the EU has focused attention on production, and this has brought new challenges. The market itself has begun to make new and different demands on suppliers. Growing concern with food miles can be offset by positive message about the ACP-EU food producer trade into the spotlight. A number of EU supermarkets are labelling or freighted produce and promoting “local” produce. In the same vein, consumers have become more interested in the social impact of the goods they buy and some retailer brands are going beyond quality and food safety messages on their labels to include adequate information about fair trade, extraneous trade and food miles. ACP exporters and produce buyers need to be in line and adapt to these new challenges. They need a capacity to defend their produce, especially in these markets. For example, in recent years ACP exporter to the EU has focused attention on production, and this has brought new challenges.

**PIP in practice**

The second phase of PIP addresses food safety and sustainability (the environment, fair and ethical trade) of the ACP fruit and vegetable sector. While export horticulture is the main focus, outputs will be adapted to local and regional markets wherever possible to also benefit ACP consumers. PIP functions through four operational components:

1. **Addressing Regulations and Standards.** By engaging with EU regulators, regulatory authorities and standard-setting bodies, PIP works to improve conditions for market access and ensure that EU Regulations and standards do not create barriers for ACP exporters. In addition, PIP continues to develop MRLs and crop protocols, collaborating with research organisations and industry, so that growers have access to the necessary crop production and pest protection technologies.
2. **Capacity Building of Supply Chain Operators.** The programme works directly with ACP exporters and export companies to enable them to meet local and EU regulations as well as commercial standards. This is supported by the PIP Training Unit which develops teaching resources on a broad range of topics, and implements a cascade approach to training from senior management to production staff, field workers, and small-scale growers.
3. **Capacity Building of Service Providers.** Projects supported by PIP include crop protocols, publications, training tools and cascading. Such projects come in the form of training materials, technical assistance, and information dissemination. PIP also supports peer-to-peer networking, in particular small-scale growers.
4. **Promoting Good Agricultural Practice.** PIP supports the development of local food and horticultural trade systems for export products in ACP countries in line with regional, international and EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulations.

**PIP PHASE 2**

To ensure that the horticultural trade continues to be a driver for economic growth, ACP producers and producers must have the necessary information, skills and human resources to maintain market access and to capitalise on new opportunities. There is potential to increase the contribution made by the trade to poverty alleviation in ACP countries, especially among small-scale producers such as rural women who face limited information generating capacities. There are also important opportunities that are built on advances made in the ACP sector so far and are implemented in, and policy and market opportunities. This new trading environment may also create opportunities, for example, in niche markets that promote environmentally and socially responsible production.

**New market requirements**

The trade in horticultural produce from the ACP Group of States to Europe has grown over the past 20 years. In many countries, it is now an important contributor to national income, poverty alleviation, sustainable innovation. Future development of this sector could play an important role in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. However, in this increasingly global economy, ACP suppliers and parters need to continuously adjust to changing conditions and pressures to maintain their foothold in the marketplace.

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New market requirements

At close of PIP Phase 1, ACP suppliers faced additional challenges. On the one hand there are ever stricter safety regulations that may influence the future availability of plant protection products. Moreover, the market is characterised by different demands on suppliers. Growing concerns with climate change has boosted attention on food miles, and the tax-energy that accompanies it is a driver behind PIP. The rise of 'buy local' campaigns. At the same time, EU consumers have focused attention on the social impact of the goods they buy, and the marketing and retail sector have been increasingly aware of the need to respond to growing consumer pressure to improve food miles.

The driver behind PIP was the change to EU legislation, but the early years of the programme involved a dramatic growth in the use of full import regimes and 'private' standards. These were often more complex and stringent than the regulations, and though not a legal requirement, were becoming mandatory for ACP suppliers. With the implementation of the EU's FSP (Fruit and Vegetables Safety Programme), 30 crop protocols and good practice guides for the main ACP horticultural crops (80% of exports) are going to facilitate compliance with EU regulations and pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs). In addition, PIP continues to develop MRLs and crop protocols, collaborating with research organisations and industry, so that growers have access to the necessary crop production and pest control technologies.

PIP PHASE 2

To ensure that the horticultural trade continues to be a driver for economic growth, ACP producers and exporters need to know that minimum information, skills and human resources to maintain market access and in capitalisation on new opportunities. There is potential to increase the contribution made by the trade to poverty alleviation in ACP countries, especially among small growers such as rural women who have the agricultural resources and income generating opportunities. There are also important opportunities for growth in the export sector and this requires information, skills and support on issues such as Good Agricultural Practice, food safety, so that they also benefit for local and regional development.

In recognition of these aspects, and to take advantage of the operational framework already in place, the ACP Secretariat requested a second phase of the PIP programme, which was launched in October 2009.
COLEACP, an international resource for the horticultural trade

The evolution of PIP

During the late 1970s, COLEACP became aware that the new EU food safety regulations required producers and exporters from ACP countries to be trained. The Association worked with the major stakeholders to develop a programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of ACP countries. This programme became known as PIP (Peel it Right Programme) and was launched in 2001. It is funded by the European Development Fund to the tune of 38.2 million Euros, and operated for the next 8 years in 28 ACP countries.

To provide the necessary technical background, PIP developed a comprehensive training programme, designed to enhance ACP producers and exporters’ knowledge and understanding of EU food safety regulations. EU regulations and pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs) are complex and not necessarily uniform. To help exporters remain competitive, PIP has developed a series of 30 crop protocols and guides for the main ACP horticultural products, working directly with stakeholders to ensure that minimum EU standards are met.

The driver behind PIP was the need to change legislation, but the early years of the programme involved a great deal of change in the use of industry codes of practice or ‘private standards’. These codes were more complex and stricter than the regulations, and often not taken into account, leading to unnecessary barriers for ACP goods and services. If PIP was to help ACP suppliers maintain their position, it was essential to have effective target compliance with legislative requirements. It became necessary also to help firms meet the emerging market demands.

At close of PIP Phase 1, ACP suppliers faced additional challenges. On the one hand there are EU food safety regulations that may influence the future availability of plant protection products. Most importantly, the market changes and the diversification of demand differ across regions. Growing concerns with climate change have increased attention to the EU’s Green Deal. All these factors add to the need for the ACP-EU food-producer trade to evolve. A number of EU supermarkets are looking at improved product quality and the importance of the way food is grown over the past 20 years. In many countries, it is now an important contributor to national income, poverty alleviation, and food security. It is therefore an important market to be part of.

The trade in horticultural produce from the ACP Group of States to Europe has grown over the past 20 years. In many countries, it is now an important contributor to national income, poverty alleviation, and food security. It is therefore an important market to be part of.

In addition, PIP continues to develop MRLs and crop protocols, ensuring that growers have access to the necessary crop production and pest-control technologies. ACP producers and exporters need to be able to meet and adapt to these new challenges. They also need a capacity to defend their interest if required. They have an interest in the development of the sector which could play an important role in alleviating poverty and contributing to the Millennium Development Goals. This new trading environment may also provide further opportunities to build on advances already made in the ACP export sector by disseminating knowledge and skills on aspects such as Good Agricultural Practice and food safety, so that they also benefit production for local consumption.

To ensure that the horticultural trade continues to be a driver for economic growth, ACP producers and consumers must have the necessary information, skills and human resources to maintain market access and to capitalise on new opportunities. There is potential to increase the contribution made by the trade to poverty alleviation in ACP countries, especially among women and children. It is therefore important to provide information and training to ACP stakeholders on the diverse range of information and training options. There are also important opportunities for building advances in the ACP export sector and disseminating them to the wider ACP region.

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PIP in practice

The second phase of PIP addresses food safety and sustainability (the environment, fair and ethical trade) of the ACP fruit and vegetable sector.

PIP TARGET GROUPS AND BENEFICIARIES

PIP works directly with stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The programme targets are horticultural producers, producer organisations, exporters and other supply chain operators (e.g. field and packhouse workers) as well as ACP producers who offer a service to the industry in horticulture, food safety, fair and ethical trade, and environmental protection. PIP’s main beneficiaries are ACP consumer goods companies to enable them to meet local EU regulations as well as commercial standards. This is supported by the PIP Tracking Tool which develops teaching resources on a broad range of topics, and implements a cascade approach to training from sector management to packhouse staff, field workers, and small-scale growers.

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In recognition of these aspects, and to take advantage of the operational framework already in place, the ACP Secretariat requested a second phase of the PIP programme, which was launched in October 2009.

• Addressing Regulations and Standards. By engaging with EU retailers, regulatory authorities, and standard-setting bodies, PIP works to improve conditions for market access and ensure that EU Regulations and commercial standards do not create barriers for ACP exporters. In addition, PIP continues to develop MRLs and crop protocols, collaborating with research organizations and industry so that growers have access to the necessary crop production and pest-control technologies.

• Capacity Building of Supply Chain Operators. As ACP producers can now sell directly to the marketplace, ACP producers and export companies need to ensure that their local and EU regulations are met. This is supported by the PIP Tracking Tool which develops teaching resources on a broad range of topics, and implements a cascade approach to training from sector management to packhouse staff, field workers, and small-scale growers.

• Capacity Building of Service Providers. Information/Communication. The role of local service providers is targeted in order to support the implementation of new training programmes. The focus of PIP is to provide support to local service providers in order to ensure they remain up-to-date with accessible information and market requirements, and efficiently advise on how to access support.

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PIP Mission Statement

The following principles underlie the second phase of PIP:

1. Towards zero pesticide residues. Mindful of market demands concerning the environment and human health, PIP will promote measures that are both technically and economically viable and enable the supply of fruit and vegetables with minimal pesticide residues.

2. Meeting the demands of European consumers. Besides food safety, environmental protection as well as fair and ethical trade are becoming the most pressing consumer concerns. In the same way that it fulfils food safety, PIP will address these new issues to help ACP suppliers take the necessary action.

3. Raising awareness and influencing policy. PIP will lobby policy makers to ensure that the impact of their decisions on ACP players, and on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, can be taken into account. This includes public sector (e.g. EC legislators) and private sector players (e.g. retailers), to ensure that the horticultural trade contributes to the achievement of the MDGs: poverty alleviation, food security, and environmental protection.

4. Facilitating trade to support smallholder farmers. European supermarkets are increasingly aware of their role, and responsibilities in promoting sustainable trade and poverty alleviation. PIP will strive to keep small-scale growers at the heart of ACP horticultural supply chains. This means reducing technical and economic barriers, as well as helping producers and exporters to overcome them.

5. Contributing to sustainable and safe food for local markets. The considerable progress made in improving production for export should also benefit and be a factor in the modernisation of local ACP horticulture. PIP will adapt production guides for use by support programmes to improve production and distribution for the local market.

6. Developing fair trade. A review of existing socio-economically important but threatened supply chains. Faced with increasing production costs due to the combined demands of supermarkets and new legislation, PIP will develop Fair Trade supply chains in the fruit and vegetable sector in collaboration with key players in the industry.

7. Contributing to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Through the activities of PIP, COLEACP will encourage and support its members and other private sector players (e.g. retailers), to ensure that the horticultural trade contributes to the achievement of the MDGs: poverty alleviation, food security, and environmental protection.


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