



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and FAO

Boosting agricultural productivity and building resilience

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines joined FAO in 1981. Early assistance was delivered through a range of interventions focusing on capacity building, policy formulation, agricultural planning and legislation development. More recently, Interventions have addressed food security programmes, technology transfer for improved production and strengthening of market infrastructure. A major feature of current cooperation is resilience building in the face of climate change.

Farmer field schools upgrade small ruminant production

Livestock production is considered a major repository of wealth, providing a source of food as well as income for many vulnerable rural households. Yet it has never played a major role in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' overall agriculture sector and has failed to keep up with the overall demand for livestock products.

Considering the vital role of livestock production and the fact that the country has the potential to be self-sufficient in small ruminant production, FAO has been helping to build the capacities of small ruminant farmers.

Small ruminant Farmer Field Schools have been established in different locations across Saint Vincent. Employing a 'learning by doing' approach consisting of on-farm activities and demonstrations, these schools have empowered more than 60 farmers and facilitators, both women and men, to manage their farms efficiently and profitably. Small ruminant producers have gained considerably from the schools' promotion of technologies and practices for sustainable and profitable goat and sheep enterprises. Guidance has been provided on good farm management practices, for example, including the use of artificial insemination as a breeding tool.

Matching FAO's expertise to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' development priorities

FAO assistance in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is shaped by the 2016-2019 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which hinges on four priority areas:

- **Food and Nutrition Security**, building on the launching of the Zero Hunger Challenge from the previous CPF period, emphasizing on agricultural diversification, nutrition education, strengthened governance in FNS and poverty reduction programmes and addressing strategies for reducing food losses and waste across key value chains improving the capacity of government to make better evidence-based decisions using an efficient data management system for agriculture.
- **Resilience Building against Disaster and Climate Change**, focusing on the development and implementation of National Disaster plans and the provision of assistance for the development and strengthening of sustainable land and marine resources management systems and the strengthening of resilient farming and production systems.
- **Improved Market Systems**, supporting farmers' organizations by developing public purchasing policy and programmes which will link farmers to national institutions such as the school feeding programmes.
- **Sustainable Natural Resource Management**, focusing on sustainable agroforestry management, improved institutional capacity for water resource management and pest and disease management in the agricultural sector.

Jointly developed with the Government and other partners, the CPF contributes to the **New Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development 2010-2020** and takes into account the country's obligations as a member of Economic Union under the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). It is also aligned with the outcomes of the **UN Development Assistance Framework for Barbados and the OECS**, the **OECS Treaty on Agriculture**, the **OECS Agriculture Policy and Strategic Plan (2003)** and the **St. Georges Declaration**. The CPF supports FAO's strategic objectives and priorities for the OECS as well as subregional programmes addressing cross-border agricultural issues.

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Emergency assistance and resilience building

A small island developing state (SIDS), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is prone to many types of natural hazard, including hurricanes, droughts, flooding, landslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. It is therefore highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change. In December 2013, the country was struck by torrential rains and high winds resulting from a Low Level Trough System passing through the Eastern Caribbean (Dominica and Saint Lucia were affected by the same event). Agriculture – including forestry – was the worst-affected sector.

“The Zero Hunger Challenge means making sure that all food systems are sustainable ... and enabling smallholders to increase their productivity and incomes.”

José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General

An FAO project was put in place to help low-income and vulnerable farmers affected by the disaster to resume production and improve their immediate food security situation, while also enhancing resilience to natural disasters in the long term.

Following an initial damage assessment, FAO assistance focused on a number of areas. In the poultry sector, the Organization assisted with rehabilitation of the sole government hatchery and provided training in hatchery management practices.

In collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the national Forestry Department, the Organization organized removal of fallen trees and debris from riverbeds – an activity that has proved beneficial for several reasons. Such clean-up activities reduce the risk of future flooding and provide cash income for people living in the affected areas. Furthermore, the conversion of fallen trees into charcoal has created additional income opportunities.

In addition to FAO's support, the Government of Brazil contributed to this emergency project with a special donation for equipment.

Emergency assistance for the recovery of vulnerable farmers affected by the December 2013 rains and winds.

Reviving bamboo weaving for income generation

Decades ago, bamboo was widely used by Georgetown artisans to build baskets and other household items. As part of a move to revive this traditional craft, 15 young women have been trained by two local trainers in bamboo harvesting and processing as well as in weaving of baskets and other items. This initiative was made possible through the support of a local community development organization and a small grant from FAO. The main objective is to generate income opportunities, especially for young people. In this case, one of the trainers was an 80-year-old artisan, who was able to preserve a valuable tradition, pass on knowledge and expertise to the younger generation. The training programme ended with an exhibition at which the trainees presented their craft products.

Zero hunger: regional scope – country focus

FAO has been supporting the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' commitment to the “Zero Hunger Challenge” as part of a regional initiative targeting the Eastern Caribbean States. The initiative is addressing the structural causes of hunger and targeting the most vulnerable communities, with interventions focused on the establishment of small-scale home and school gardens as an immediate means of increased household food availability. Particular attention is paid to strengthening school feeding programmes and promoting food-based dietary guidelines. Governance structures and mechanisms to attain food and nutrition security at the national level are also being enhanced through improved communication and information sharing among key stakeholders and the empowerment of civil society and non-state actors.

At the policy level, the Government and FAO have developed a Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, which are now being implemented through the national Zero Hunger initiative.

Project: Support for the Development and Implementation the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) Initiative in selected OECS Countries.

