

Project concept note

Title:	Promoting sustainable banana production and trade through the development of the World Banana Forum
Beneficiary countries:	Banana producing and exporting countries; key import markets
Duration of the project:	2011 to 2012
Funding sought:	US\$ 956,000



The need for urgent action

Bananas are the world's most exported fresh fruit both in volume and value (US\$7 bn/year). They are an essential source of income and employment for hundreds of thousands of rural households in developing countries. However, agrochemical-intensive production on large-scale plantations along with declining producer prices have given rise to many environmental and social challenges. These can only be properly addressed if all the sector's stakeholders collaborate actively.

A series of international conferences gathering key players from the banana industry, public sector and civil society forged consensus on the need to establish a permanent forum. Hence, the **World Banana Forum (WBF)** was launched at a conference organized by FAO in Rome in 2009 with the participation of some 150 stakeholders from the whole banana sector worldwide. They have formed **3 specialized working groups** to implement practical activities which address the most urgent **environmental, social and economic** challenges.

Objectives

The project will support the activities of the World Banana Forum promoting the **worldwide adoption of best practices for sustainable banana production and trade**. The WBF provides a space where farmer organizations, exporter groups, trading companies, workers unions, retailers, governments, research institutions and civil society organizations discuss the various problems facing the banana sector and jointly seek solutions through collaboration. Its specialized Working Groups and partners work together to promote:

- **sustainable management of natural resources;**
- mitigation of **climate change and uncontrolled environmental impact;**
- respect for **human rights** (labour rights, health and safety at work);
- promotion of **gender equity;**
- **fair distribution of value** along the supply chain;
- **knowledge sharing** as a tool for development (sharing information on best practices).

The project will focus its activities on **finding practical solutions to field problems**. It will undertake activities that can rapidly generate gains for all stakeholders. Its outputs will be made available for free to everyone in three languages (English, French, Spanish).

Expected Outputs

1. Best practices and guidance documents have been developed, field tested and disseminated to generate **environmental improvement** in the banana industry such as:
 - reduction of agrochemical use and adoption of alternatives;
 - mitigation of climate change;
 - adoption of integrated pest management techniques.
2. Successful case studies have been identified; recommendations and codes of conduct have been produced and adopted to promote **respect of human rights, decent work and social equity** including:
 - freedom of association and other labour rights;
 - respect of gender equity and youth employment;
 - safety and health at work.
3. Pilot projects have been conducted and recommendations have been elaborated and widely discussed to promote **a fair distribution of value along the supply chain**.
4. The World Banana Forum has adopted a charter, status, rules and procedures with a view to becoming more institutionalized. It has held a second global meeting open to everyone and produced a **programme of work and a financing scheme to ensure its sustainability**.

FAO's role

FAO will implement the project. It already facilitates the WBF and hosts its Secretariat. As an intergovernmental organization, FAO is trusted by all stakeholders, who appreciate its professionalism, independence and technical expertise. FAO gives the WBF the objectivity and credibility that are prerequisites for its success.

Required funding

The World Banana Forum is **partly funded by its participants**. However, these voluntary contributions are not sufficient to fund its activities aiming at the worldwide adoption of best practices for sustainable banana production and trade. The project will fund the following key activities:

- elaboration and dissemination of best practices by the thematic working groups;
- production, translation, printing and distribution of technical and information materials;
- participation of non-profit stakeholders from developing countries (e.g. small farmers);
- coordination of the above activities and dissemination of outputs throughout the banana sector worldwide.



Secretariat of the World Banana Forum

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade

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