



## Action Plan COLEACP-COVID 19 – May 2020

Over the past two months COLEACP has been orienting its programme activities towards helping to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the agricultural and food economy of ACP countries. This takes the form of a five-point action plan, based on a set of clear principles:

- Workstream 1: Information and communication
- Workstream 2: Health and safety
- Workstream 3: Business support
- Workstream 4: Market access and food security
- Workstream 5: Advocacy

The objective is to enable smallholders, farmer groups and MSMEs to produce and sell horticultural products sustainably and improve their access to national, regional and international markets while implementing COVID-19 preventive health and safety measures.

### 1. Information and Communication

COLEACP aims to keep its programme stakeholders in ACP and EU countries continually informed about rapidly changing market access conditions and trade dynamics in the horticultural sector and even in other key agri-food value chains. In the short term, the information will also be disseminated through the Pan African Farmers Organisation (PAFO) member network in a format tailored to the target audience. In the longer term, and post-COVID 19, we will evolve towards a news blog disseminated via COLEACP's websites, including country websites, the first 20 of which are now online:

<https://angola.coleacp.org>

<https://benin.coleacp.org>

<https://burkina-faso.coleacp.org>

<https://cameroun.coleacp.org>

<https://cote-divoire.coleacp.org>

<https://ethiopia.coleacp.org>

<https://gambia.coleacp.org>

<https://ghana.coleacp.org>

<https://guinee-cky.coleacp.org>

<https://kenya.coleacp.org>

<https://madagascar.coleacp.org>

<https://mali.coleacp.org>

<https://mauritius.coleacp.org>

<https://nigeria.coleacp.org>

<https://rdc.coleacp.org>

<https://rwanda.coleacp.org>

<https://senegal.coleacp.org>

<https://togo.coleacp.org>

<https://uganda.coleacp.org>

<https://zimbabwe.coleacp.org>

Other country websites will soon be online, including Caribbean and Pacific regional websites.



## 2. Health and safety

COLEACP aims to ensure that smallholders, farmer groups and horticultural MSMEs have the capacity to implement preventive health and safety measures related to COVID-19. COLEACP is helping to raise public awareness of the coronavirus, how it is spread, the barrier actions to apply, the principles to employ and, most importantly, the new behaviours to adopt to avoid contaminating colleagues, families and communities.

The first step in this process has been to develop content with scientists, on the basis of WHO and FAO recommendations, to develop a distance learning course. This course is primarily aimed at experts – trainers working with the horticultural sector in ACP countries – who have the capacity to assimilate the key messages and to disseminate them widely to target audiences.

The first sections of this training are now online. More than 40 experts from different ACP countries are being trained, not only in basic knowledge on coronavirus and COVID-19, but also in good practices horticultural companies should adopt to continue their activities while fighting the pandemic, as well as how to disseminate barrier gestures within communities. The training also provides the necessary tools to support horticultural companies to apply these measures. Following this training, coaching will be organised by COLEACP in partnership with the experts who have successfully completed the training.

The second step will be to extend the dissemination of key messages to stakeholders (public and private) and rural populations through PAFO members and other rural networks, in particular family farms exposed to COVID-19 risks. A cascading system is established, from the person acting as first relay, to successive layers of dissemination among the populations of workers, producers and members of their respective communities.

## 3. Business support

COLEACP aims to ensure that smallholders, farmer groups and horticultural MSMEs have the necessary skills and business tools to carry out their production, processing and marketing operations in an efficient, cost-effective and inclusive manner. Activities include training of local experts, business survival bootcamps, comprehensive support through e-coaching sessions, and individual support (such as tailor-made business support), to be carried out remotely. These activities cover the following areas: cashflow management, cost management, HR management, operations management, and access to financing.

- A strategic partnership is being formalised with the African Management Institute to facilitate Business Survival Bootcamps. The first bootcamps are scheduled for the first week of June. COLEACP's partner companies and experts have been made aware of these training opportunities to collect their expressions of interest and estimate the number of sessions needed.
- A pilot has been launched in Côte d'Ivoire for e-coaching sessions in the West African mango sector. These sessions will be spread over several weeks and aim to support the company in the development and implementation of its contingency and recovery plan.



#### 4. Market access and food security

In the context of COVID-19 disruptions, COLEACP aims to provide ACP producers/exporters and their professional organisations with continually updated information on developments in logistics and national, regional, international and European fruit and vegetable markets; and to facilitate the marketing of ACP fruit and vegetable production at local, regional and international levels. Activities include:

##### Logistics

- permanent relations with transport companies
- a weekly report on the availability of air, sea and road freight
- a search for collective solutions to ensure the maintenance of trade corridors for food products in ACP countries and between the ACP and main markets, including the EU.

##### Trade and market access

- identification and validation of existing market places (national and regional) for promotion to producers to facilitate the sale of their fruit and vegetables
- mapping of the main local buyers of horticultural products (including processing plants)
- a simple online interface allowing producers to inform on the availability of horticultural products for sale and to promote this offer to marketplaces and local buyers
- identification and promotion of simple and affordable solutions for processing fresh fruit and vegetables in order to avoid losses due to lack of freight and customers.

The new web interface is now in testing, in close collaboration with horticultural professional associations in seven pilot countries: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal. Local COLEACP experts are developing lists of buyers at national level, online and offline (including markets, supermarkets, catering chains, wholesalers etc.).

#### 5. Advocacy

COLEACP aims to represent and defend the interests of the ACP horticultural sector at the international level and with decision-makers (governments, donors, international institutions, financial services, etc.). Current activities include:

- Design and implementation of surveys for horticultural operators in all ACP countries to identify priority areas regarding short-, medium- and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A general survey and two country surveys (Kenya and Cameroon) have been conducted among COLEACP's programme stakeholders. This has informed the prioritisation of advocacy activities, for example in the area of air freight. Other country surveys are under development.
- Establishment of business-led COVID-19 national working groups, drawing on COLEACP's network of professional associations and farmers' organisations. Ongoing relations are maintained with professional associations representing MSMEs in the horticultural trade and with those representing producers, notably through PAFO and its regional member organisations.



- Drafting and promotion of policy recommendations to governments, international institutions, donors and financial services. This involves designing contingency and recovery plans for the ACP horticultural sector and identifying the means and resources needed for their implementation. COLEACP is working closely with the Organisation of ACP States (OACPS) and the Regional Economic Communities in ACP countries to define priority activities both during and after the pandemic. On request, specific emergency situations are being dealt with on a country-by-country basis within the framework of COLEACP's programme activities.