

Promoting Agribusiness within the CSME

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UPDATES



Caribbean Agro-Tourism Development Alliance (CATDA)

There is increasing awareness of the economic and other benefits to be derived from a well-supported Agro-Tourism sector. Within recent years, there have been a number of studies and pilot projects related to this field implemented in a number of CARICOM Member States. The Inter-American Institute for the Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) has been one of the agencies in the region leading some of these initiatives and is currently commissioning services to develop a Regional Strategy on Agro-Tourism.

Within recent months, the CARICOM Secretariat, in collaboration with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), has outlined a concept proposal for promoting a business partnership among public and private stakeholders in the sector, the Caribbean Agro-Tourism Development Alliance. The objective of the Alliance is to facilitate profitable market linkages between the agro-industry and tourism sectors through private-public partnerships. The intent is to build on similar pilot projects, particularly those that supported market linkages between farmers and hotels. While these pilot programmes to date have been donor driven; small-scale; and fragmented, the expected added value of the proposed CATDA initiative include:

- i. Broadening and deepening the scope of these pilot programmes to target a wider range of beneficiaries and services;
- ii. Placing the private sector in the driver seat, to ensure sustainability; and
- iii. Establishing a coordinated business framework for private-public sector partnership.

The Alliance will be guided by the following principles: mutual benefit, partners' contribution, technical quality, regional integration, local ownership, and transformational change. The Secretariat has had a number of meetings with potential partners and continues to do so. It is in the process of elaborating the concept proposal into a more detailed project document, based on feedback received from stakeholders. It is also expected to convene shortly a regional

consultation with a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders, including development partners, to fine tune the project document and increase stakeholder buy-in.