

**ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION NEEDS IN
AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN & PACIFIC (ACP) STATES FOR CTA'S
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

Caribbean: Overview Regional Report

Final Report

Prepared by:

BARBARA GUMBS

on behalf of the

Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)

Project: 4-7-41-204-4/g

November 2005

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List of Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
BZ	Belize Dollars
CAIS	Caribbean Agricultural Information Service
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARIBCAN	CARICOM-CANADA
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCSD	Communication Channels and Services Department
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICM	Information and Communication Management
ICMSSD	Information and Communication Management Skills and Systems Department
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IPSD	Information Products and Services Department
MERCOSUR	Mercado Comun del Cono Sur/Common Market of the South
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
P&CS	Planning and Corporate Services
QAS	Question and Answer Service
SDI	Selective Dissemination of Information
USD	United States Dollar
WINFA	Windward Islands Farmers Association
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The focus of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)¹ is to develop and provide services that improve access to information for agricultural and rural development, and to strengthen the capacity of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to produce, acquire, exchange and utilize this information. The Planning Corporate Services Department assists the operational departments in CTA by gathering agricultural intelligence on the ACP environment. This intelligence is used to identify emerging issues and trends and to guide the direction of programme activities in effective implementation. This study was conducted within this context.

Background

In CTA's Strategic Plan (2001-2005), the Centre was charged with identification of a wider cross-section of partners and beneficiaries that would also include new target groups e.g. women, youth and the private sector. In addition, changes may have taken place since the CTA/CARDI 1997 information needs assessment which launched the CAIS programme. CTA and its partners therefore agreed on the execution of this study which focuses on the needs of institutions rather than on professional groups as in the 1997 study.

Objectives of the study

The study had four objectives. Two of these objectives were to identify the need for CTA products and services and the need for building capacity for information and communication management. The third objective was to identify potential partners and beneficiaries. The target groups for this study were key actors/beneficiaries in the agricultural sector. The fourth objective was to collect baseline data to facilitate subsequent monitoring activities.

Expected results

CTA expects that as a result of this study, the operational departments and CTA's local representatives will be more informed about the information needs in the Caribbean. This information will enable CTA to develop appropriate strategies and a suitable framework which will lead to better delivery of products, services and interventions aimed at partners and beneficiaries that include women, youth, the private sector and civil society organizations.

¹ CTA was established in 1983 under the Lomé Convention between the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States and the European Union Member States. Since 2000, it has operated within the framework of the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement.

Methodology

Data and information were collected at country² level by national consultants. Prior to the start of the study, consultants participated in briefing sessions which were planned and led by a team consisting of the CTA Deputy Head of Planning Corporate Services, the Information Resources Manager of CARDI and the Regional Coordinator for this study. During the briefing session each participant received data capture forms and a report outline guide for use during interviews in the field and in the preparation of the final report. During the course of the project, members had access to a D-Group established for ease of communication among participants. The Regional Coordinator was available for consultation throughout the execution of the project.

Findings

Findings are grouped according to information needs, information management capacity and information sources.

Information Needs

All reports indicated that institutions encountered difficulties in obtaining nationally generated data and information. Information on markets, market trends, current information on trade and trade agreements were of importance to all countries and in particular those in which diversification is being driven by the decline in markets for sugar and bananas. Information on conferences, workshops trade fairs and commodity profiles was required across all institutions and countries.

Three countries indicated that there was need for the adaptation and repackaging of information taking into account conditions in the local environment as well as the needs of target groups that include not only researchers, but also agribusiness executives, farmers and vulnerable groups in rural communities.

Information Management Capacity

Deficiencies information management capacity are due to the lack of or sub-optimal allocation of human, physical infrastructure and/or financial resources. Each report indicated that there were no information policies and/or strategies to guide institutional information management processes.

In all countries there are institutions with some capability for information and communication management. However the required mix of equipment and trained human resources is lacking. Institutions also lack capacity for continuing

² The following countries participated in this phase of the study: Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago.

development and maintenance of websites, resulting in little or no information exchange on their websites.

Two countries pointed to the need for creating not only the demand for information but also the necessity for recognizing the importance of information in managing all facets of the economy.

Information Sources

Agricultural ministries were important sources of information for all respondents. Input suppliers were identified as another source of information. Several institutions with a specific commodity focus depended on national and regional producer organizations. Such organizations provided not only documentary information but also technical advice, and assistance in establishing extra-regional linkages. CARDI and IICA were also cited as important information sources.

The Internet has become a popular source for identifying relevant information. While Internet use has certainly increased, many institutions cannot make full use of opportunities presented by ICTs due to lack of equipment and trained manpower. Therefore full exploitation of the benefits of electronic networking cannot be realised.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are structured according to the responsibilities of each of CTA's departments.

Planning and Corporate Services Department

1. CTA should select at least one partner institution in each country. The institution should have an active outreach programme with activities focused on strengthening services to farmers, women, youth and the private sector.
2. CTA needs to develop more effective mechanisms for maintaining visibility in the Region.

The Information Products and Services Department

3. Urgent attention should be given to collating the techno-economic information identified as needed by institutions in order to develop a response through CTA products and services.
4. CTA and its Regional Branch Office should continue to assist institutions that are data custodians in formulating policies and strategies to address the need for sector-specific data and information.
5. Further strengthening of institutions that offer QAS is required.

6. A regional “virtual” unit with a trained cadre of professional writers and communication specialists is required to repackage information for a range of target groups and beneficiaries.

The Communication Channels and Services Department

7. Mechanisms (in addition to training courses) should be introduced to assist institutions in becoming proficient in maintaining their web pages.

8. Consideration should be given to finding assistance for establishment of national A/V centres for the preparation and dissemination of information to the farming communities.

9. Consideration should be given to exploring sources of assistance for establishment of rural telecentres in those countries with remote farming communities.

10. Assistance in linking commodity groups in each country to similar groups and networks in other ACP countries will strengthen producer groups in the Region.

11. CTA should explore with national partners the introduction and strengthening of rural radio programmes (where these are already in production).

The Information and Communication Management Skills and Systems Department

12. Practical assistance should be provided to key institutions for the formulation of institutional information policies and strategies, building on templates distributed under the CAIS programme.

13. More workshops should be held at the national level to address the need for building a critical core of personnel from several national institutions.

14. Practical programmes at the national level to address the development, implementation and monitoring of marketing policies and strategies for QAS are required.

15. Working manuals and guides should be formulated and/or adapted for the Caribbean Region to accompany information and communication management courses and workshops.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The focus of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)³ is to develop and provide services that improve access to information for agricultural and rural development, and to strengthen the capacity of ACP countries to produce, acquire, exchange and utilize this information. CTA conducts its activities through three operational departments. These departments are: Information Products and Services, Communication Channels and Services and Information and Communication Management Skills and Systems. The overarching department – Planning Corporate Services (P&CS) – provides support to the three operational departments through methodological underpinning of their work and through the gathering of agricultural intelligence on the ACP environment. This intelligence is used to identify emerging issues and trends and to guide the direction of programme activities in effective implementation. The current study is being conducted within this context.

1.1 Background

2. In 1997, CTA and CARDI, its Regional Branch Office in the Caribbean, conducted an information needs assessment which led to the establishment of the Caribbean Agricultural Information Service (CAIS). CAIS introduced programmed activities that focused on capacity building for information management. These activities included training workshops, training attachments and consultations on-site, and the generation of a capacity building series of bulletins. In addition to supporting CAIS, CTA has also been working with partners in some Caribbean countries in the co-execution of specific projects and in the supply of technical publications to a cross-section of beneficiaries. In CTA's Strategic Plan (2001-2005), the Centre was charged with identification of a wider cross-section of partners and beneficiaries that would also include new target groups e.g. women, youth and the private sector. In addition, given the global importance of information and communication management and the changes that may have taken place since the last information needs assessment, CTA and its partners agreed on the execution of this study. It should be noted that the 1997 study focused on the information needs of eleven professional groups within the sector. This 2005 study on the assessment of agricultural information needs is directed at "key" institutions in the sector.

³ CTA was established in 1983 under the Lome Convention between the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States and the European Union Member States. Since 2000, it has operated within the framework of the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

3. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify agricultural information needs of key actors/beneficiaries for CTA products and services;
- To identify needs of potential actors/beneficiaries of CTA activities and services in terms of building capacity for information and communication management;
- To identify potential partners/beneficiaries for CTA activities and services;
- To develop some baseline data to facilitate subsequent monitoring activities

1.3 Expected Results

4. CTA expects that this study will assist the three operational departments as well as its local representatives:

- to improve and better target interventions and activities aimed at potential partners and beneficiaries (including women, youth, private sector and civil society organizations);
- to have a more informed picture of their needs;
- to develop a strategy and framework of action;
- to improve on the delivery of CTA's products and services, where specific needs are identified.

1.4 Methodology

5. Data and information were collected at country⁴ level by national consultants. Prior to the start of the study, consultants participated in briefing sessions which were planned and led by a team consisting of the CTA Deputy Head of Planning Corporate Services, the Information Manager of CARDI and the Regional Coordinator.

6. Briefing sessions were mounted for two groups of consultants. In addition two individual sessions were held to accommodate two consultants who could not participate in the group sessions. The following items were addressed during the briefing sessions:

⁴ The following countries participated in this phase of the study: Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago.

- Overview of CTA activities and accompanying source documents which were presented to each consultant as background material;
 - Overview of CARDI activities;
 - Overview of the previous CTA/CARDI Caribbean study on information needs that was executed in 1997;
 - Detailed assessment of the data capture form which was designed for use during interviews in the field;
 - Examination and discussion of a detailed report writing guide. This guide was designed by CTA to assist the consultants in understanding what was required in the content of the report and to ensure consistency in the presentation of all reports;
 - Instructions for using the D-Group established especially for this study to assist in facilitating general communication among consultants and project personnel;
 - Availability of the regional coordinator throughout the period of the study.
7. According to the Terms of Reference, (See Annex I), each consultant was required to prepare a report in two phases. Phase I consisted of a desk study that provided baseline data and identification of “key” agricultural institutions. The Phase I report became Annexes II and III of the full report. The draft Phase I report was edited first by the Regional Coordinator and then by the CTA. Phase II included field interviews and the preparation of a report that presented a descriptive country profile, information sources, needs, conclusions, recommendations and the results of Phase I as annexes.
8. The Regional Coordinator was committed to submitting a regional report, the contents of which were agreed to by the CTA, the CARDI Information Manager and the Regional Coordinator. This report therefore presents an overview of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, an overview of information and communication management issues and a synopsis of the conclusions and recommendations made by country consultants. The Regional Coordinator was also required to submit conclusions and recommendations from an overall regional perspective for CTA actions in the Caribbean.
9. The intention of this report is to provide the context within which information needs and capacity building needs must be addressed. It is not the intention of this overview to present details for each country in the study, but rather to highlight issues that are common to a group of countries and, where identified, inclusion of those issues that may be unique to individual countries. Such issues would be considered pertinent to planning any intervention programmes for the improvement of information and communication management in the Caribbean.

1.5 Assumptions/Limitations

Assumptions

10. The following are the assumptions that were made during the conceptualization of this study:

- Qualified and experienced personnel in the agricultural sector would be the most suitable type of consultant to conduct the study in-country;
- Briefing sessions would prepare the consultants to execute the study.
- The availability of a Regional Coordinator would provide support to consultants and at the same time provide a mechanism for initial screening as first-line editor;
- Current CTA partners would be deliberately excluded from this study since CTA already had data and information on their needs and had already fostered an on-going relationship with them.

Limitation

11. Completion of data capture forms was totally dependent on country consultants who were all experienced in the agricultural field, but who did not necessarily have professional librarian or information specialist qualifications, and experience or a professional “passion” for understanding information needs.

2. OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURE INCLUDING FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

2.1 Agriculture

12. Agriculture (including fisheries and forestry) is the mainstay in the economies of all countries that participated in this study. Agriculture contributes to food security, occupation and income for rural communities, savings generated by import substitution and direct earnings of foreign exchange.
13. The contribution of agriculture to the GDP of each country varies from country to country. For example in Guyana, agriculture has consistently contributed over 30 % to GDP between 1994 and 2004 (with the exception of 1997, 1998, and 2000 when it contributed 29 %). In Antigua on the other hand, where the contribution is just 3 %, the agricultural sector is nevertheless very important since it accounts for 8 % of the Antigua labour force of 30,000 (*Antigua Country Report. Annex II.1.1*). In Guyana the importance of agriculture to the economy is also demonstrated by the fact that agriculture inclusive of forestry and fisheries has traditionally contributed about 30 percent to the total labour force. (*Guyana Country Report. Annex II.1.1*).
14. The economy of Belize is also heavily dependent on agriculture (including forestry and aquaculture) for its foreign exchange earnings and employment. In 2003, agriculture contributed 14 % to the GDP (*Annex II. Table II.1.4.1*) The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives estimated that with the inclusion of secondary and tertiary industries such as agro-processing and retail trade, the contribution of agriculture and its retail activities to GDP is upwards of 35 %. (*Belize Country Report. 2.2 para.26*) Similarly, in the Jamaican economy the agricultural sector remains an important productive sector. It was significant to note in Jamaica, that when the outputs from food processing, beverages and tobacco are added, the sector's average annual contribution of eight percent is increased to about 16 percent (*Jamaica Country Report Annex II.1.4.*) Despite its low contribution to the GDP when compared with other sectors, the *Jamaica Country Report* indicated that "traditionally the agricultural sector has been the single largest employer of labour employing some 20% of the employed labour force and ranks third in line with mining and quarrying and tourism in terms of the country's foreign exchange earnings.
15. For years the banana crop has been the mainstay of the economies of the OECS countries in this study (Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines). However within the last two or three years the economies of these countries have been severely affected by the removal of the preferential treatment accorded them by the European Union for the importation of bananas and also by the increasing competition from banana exporting countries in Central America. In St. Lucia for example there has been a decline in the contribution of agriculture to the GDP between 1995 (11.16 %) and 2003 (4.89

%). This was due to developments (external and domestic) in the banana industry (*St. Lucia Country Report*). Similarly, in Dominica, banana production, long the mainstay of the economy, has declined from 60-70,000 metric tons in the late 1980s/ early 1990s to under 30,000 tons in 2000 due both to negative impacts of changes in the trade regime from preferential European markets (following the World Trade Organization rulings) and destructive hurricanes and storms in 1989 and 1995. There are now less than 1,200 banana producers compared over 6,600 in 1990. At this time in the agricultural sector, crop production is of greatest economic importance as it is the primary foreign exchange earner in the sector, accounting for 78.5% of all agricultural production (*See Dominica Country Report. Annex II.1.*). Besides the OECS countries, The Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and Suriname are producers of bananas.

16. Sugar is an important crop for several Caribbean countries and over the years the importation of sugar into European countries was given preferential status. More recently the European Union has announced a proposed cut of approximately 39% in the current price at which sugar is imported from ACP countries. This decision will severely affect the agricultural sectors of Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, Belize and St. Kitts, thereby forcing them to devise alternative products downstream of sugarcane and/or the introduction of major agricultural diversification programmes, some of which are already underway. In the fall out, jobs will need to be found for those who earned their livelihood in this industry.
17. In all countries, vegetables were important as a source of income for the rural communities and as a source of home grown nutrition. Besides this major role within the country, selected vegetables are earners of foreign exchange in niche markets in Europe and the United States. Other crops that are important earners of foreign exchange are sea island cotton (Barbados, Antigua & Barbuda, Nevis), citrus (Belize, Dominica), coffee (Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago), cut flowers and ornamentals (Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname).

2.2 Fisheries

18. Fishing is an important occupation in all countries, providing a livelihood for rural communities and protein for the domestic market. The situation as stated in the country report of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is typical of most countries that do not have a major export fisheries sector. This report indicated that the “fisheries sub-sector has contributed to the national economy by earning and saving foreign exchange, creating employment, and providing import substitution, good nutrition and linkages with the tourism industry. Those country reports that indicate fisheries (inclusive of crustaceans) as a major export commodity are The Bahamas, Belize, and Suriname.
19. The importance of fisheries to the economy of The Bahamas is seen by the fact that employment in the fisheries sector increased from 9,300 in 1995 to 12, 304 in 2004. In addition, of the 3 % that agriculture contributes to the GDP, 1.9 % is

generated by the fisheries sub-sector⁵. (*The Bahamas Country Report*. Annex II.1.4. Agriculture in the Economy). Fisheries exports from the Bahamas in 2003 amounted to USD 108.8 million of which crawfish tails accounted for USD 106.2 million.

20. In Belize, the 2000 census reported that there were 1,878 people employed in the fishing and processing sector. Of these 87 % were male and 13% were female. (*Belize Country Report*. Annex II. Table II.1.1.1). In 2002, marine products represented 21 % of total domestic exports, more than doubling since 1994. (*Belize Country Report*. Section 2.1.2). Fishery production is for both domestic consumption and for frozen export and contributed an estimated 5% to GDP in 2003 (*Belize Country Report*. Annex II, Table II.1.4.1). Fishery exports (including lobster, conch and shrimp) contribute significantly to Belize's foreign exchange earnings. In 2003, lobster and shrimp exports accounted for BZ\$13.5 million (Euro 5.2 million) and BZ\$92.8 million (Euro 35.8 million) in sales respectively with shrimp exports increasing almost BZ\$40 million (Euro 15.4 million) from 2002 levels (*Belize Country Report*. Annex II, Table II.1.6.1). During the period between 1992 and 2003, the number of shrimp farms increased from 3 to 13 with an associated expansion in acreage from 533 acres to 6,788 acres (*Belize Country Report*. Annex II, Table II.1.2.3). Lobster and conch dominate the marine fishery with just under 250 tonnes produced in 2003. Fish fillet production for the domestic market ranged between 18 tonnes and 50 tonnes per year during the 1997 to 2003 period with an average of 25.7 tonnes per year (*Belize Country Report*. Annex II, Table II.1.5.4).
21. The Suriname country report (*Annex II.1.2*) indicated that in 2003, fish, shrimp and crustaceans accounted for USD 37.2 million (Euro 28.7 million) in foreign exchange. In the listing of main agricultural products in Suriname, shrimp (from fisheries and aquaculture) and fish ranked second based on land use, employment and investments in the agricultural sub-sectors.

2.3 Forestry

22. Guyana, Suriname, Belize and Jamaica are heavily forested. About 75 % (65,000 square miles) of Guyana's total land area is forested and in Suriname 2.143.000 hecatres or 13 % of the total land area is devoted to nature reserves with 5 % of the labour force (4,380 people) engaged in the forest sub-sector (*Suriname Country Report*. Annex II). In Jamaica 30 % of the land area or 335,900 ha is classified as forests. In Belize, 79 % of the land (4,250,366 acres is forested and according to the 2000 census 937 people were employed in forestry/sawmilling. (*Belize Country Report*. Annex II. 1.1.1.).

⁵ The Bahamas economy is dominated by tourism (40% of GDP) and financial services (15% of GDP).

23. Various types of forest vegetation abound in the Caribbean and while this natural resource may not be commercially exploited in all countries, it is nevertheless important to soil and water conservation goals, biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism thrusts. Exploitation of forest resources for economic value includes use of the woodlands in Antigua for charcoal production, wattle harvesting for fish pots, exploitation of commercial timber in Guyana, Suriname and Belize and non-timber forest products (NTFP) in Jamaica and Suriname. In Suriname, NTFPs include meat, fish, game birds, ornamental plants, fruits, herbs and medicinal plants which are commercially traded. In Jamaica, non-wood products are put to a variety of uses that include weaving, construction, binding and medicinal purposes. Fuelwood and charcoal are estimated to be two of the leading forest products in Jamaica.

24. Agricultural Trading Agreements

24. Countries in the region have entered into regional, international and bilateral trade agreements. The major trade agreements in which most, if not all the countries are participants, or at the stage of negotiations are as follows:

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement;
- The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). This arrangement is currently under negotiation;
- The African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) – European (EU) Cotonou Agreement;
- The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). “This arrangement will allow goods, services, people, and capital to move throughout the member states without tariffs and restrictions, and by creating a regional trading block, enable the Caribbean to compete more effectively in the global economy;”⁶;
- The Caribbean Basin Initiative. Under this agreement exports are allowed duty-free access to the United States⁷;
- CARIBCAN. This is a Canadian Government programme that provides duty-free access to the Canadian market for most Commonwealth Caribbean countries⁸;
- MERCUSOR. This common market includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay⁹.

25. Export trading partners for agricultural commodities were identified as other Caribbean countries, the United States, Canada and the European Union. Destinations for specific products include Japan (sea shrimps from Suriname, sea island cotton from Antigua and Barbados), Netherlands (fruit and vegetables, fish, flowers and botanicals from Suriname) and Asia (timber from Suriname).

⁶ *The Antigua Country Report. Annex II.1.7.*

⁷ *The Jamaica Country Report. Annex II.1.7*

⁸ *Idem*

⁹ *Idem*

2.5. Themes of Sectoral Agricultural Policies

26. Without exception, all countries have goals for strengthening the agricultural sector. Some are in the process of updating strategies, for example, Antigua and Barbuda, while others have completed strategies that are being implemented in the short term and in the long term.
27. **Annex II** provides an overview of stated major themes in agricultural policies.

3. AN OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION SOURCES, NEEDS AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

3.1 Information Sources Used by Key Actors

28. An analysis of the 12 country reports indicates that all respondents considered and utilized the ministries for agriculture, fisheries and forestry as important sources of information. However, respondents in Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia indicated that outreach services provided by their ministries could be improved. In St. Lucia, input suppliers were named as a source of information and in the Bahamas, NGOs in particular, indicated that input suppliers were an information source on which they depended. In Jamaica, both overseas and local suppliers of inputs and equipment were also popular sources of information.
29. It is important to note that key actors in the agricultural sector in all countries placed great emphasis on sources such as national and regional producer organizations which have a subject specific focus. (e.g. Citrus Growers Association (Belize) and WINFA (Windward Islands Farmers Association). Many of these producer organizations also have extra-regional sources on which they depend. Regional and international research institutions (e.g. CARDI and IICA) are also important sources of information. Indications of what these specialized institutions provided can be gained from the respondents in Antigua and Barbuda who stated these to be technical advice, computer databases, reports, and provision for participation in e-groups.
30. Internet use was increasing as a source for information; this was a marked change from the reports in 1994-1997 study. In particular, Belize and Guyana¹⁰ reported the Internet as a source that is frequently used and was accepted as a “regular part of day to day operations”¹¹. The Guyana report indicated that in the past IICA, CARDI and FAO booklets were very popular; however this has changed radically with the use of the Internet and e-mail. While Internet use is increasing in the OECS, these countries still need to overcome human resource and equipment challenges. For all countries, one or all of the following were regarded as important sources of information: conferences and workshops, fairs and exhibitions.
31. Respondents in both Jamaica and Belize called attention to the fact that the documentation units charged with the supply of agricultural data and information were not the main source of information.

¹⁰ *Guyana Country Report. Paragraph #37*

¹¹ *Belize Country Report. Paragraph #46*

32. CTA and its publications were not identified as a significant source of information among respondents. In some cases respondents had not heard of CTA's activities. In one case, SPORE was recognized and utilized but as a personal subscription.

3.2 Information Needs

33. Specific production and socio-economic information needs varied with the focus and work programmes of each institution. However access to domestic sector-specific and commodity-specific data and information was of concern to respondents in all countries. This concern needs to be investigated further to determine if indeed the data and information are unavailable, inaccessible or that respondents in this study are unaware of the existence of this body of data and information. CAIS provided a template to each country for the collection and generation of a directory of national sources of agricultural information. It would be interesting to determine if use was made of this template. On the other hand, if data and information are available then it would be useful to consider mounting hands-on programmes for building marketing strategies and promotional mechanisms to assist in building awareness in prospective users.
34. Information on markets and market trends was another important need identified by all respondents. Accompanying the need for marketing data was the need for current information on trade and trade agreements which are being driven by rulings of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This is especially important given the diversification thrust in countries which are facing the decline in markets for sugar and bananas. Trade agreements that are of particular interest to the region are identified in paragraph 24.
35. Reports expressed the need for information to be made available in various formats and treatment levels to cater to the needs not only of researchers, but also of agribusiness executives, farmers and vulnerable groups within rural communities. In other words the need exists for adapting information to the local environment to meet in-country needs. A strong plea was made for greater use of audio-visual treatments of topics.
36. All countries indicated that there was limited availability of publications that support decision-making in the agricultural sector. Lack of resources to accomplish a regular publication programme was identified as a reason. The situation in Jamaica can be used as an example. The Jamaican Country Report indicated that due to the lack of technical staff to execute collation, editing and printing of their Investigations Bulletin the 2001 – 2004 issue was seriously delayed. This Investigations Bulletin has been published since 1887 and documents research activities in the Ministry of Agriculture. The objective of the Research and Development Division is to computerise the Bulletin, however shortage of technical staff to collate the information for construction of a database is an obstacle to implementing this objective. The Division recognises the importance of preparing and distributing fact sheets, bulletins, brochures and other information products using information generated from its research

programme. However the challenge to accomplishing a regular publication programme in different formats, lies in the limited availability of dedicated personnel with the required writing skills.

37. Information on conferences, workshops and trade fairs was also a need expressed by respondents. Information on commodity profiles was required across all institutions and countries.
38. All reports indicated that a need existed for generating awareness about the existence of data and information and products and services that were available locally within the sector, including information from external sources. There is therefore a need for formulation and implementation of marketing strategies especially for those institutions that function as custodians of data. Institutions that offer QAS and are custodians of CTA databases are also in need of devising such a strategy. CAIS and CTA sponsored a regional workshop on marketing of information services in the past. However follow-up activity and guidance in implementation of marketing strategies are required.

3.3 Information Management Capacity (ICM) and Associated Needs

- 39 Based on the responses and description of the status quo in all countries, it is evident that there are serious deficiencies in information and communication management. These deficiencies are due to limited human, physical and/or financial resources and the need for on-going training programmes. Most institutions (with the exception of some NGOs) had some capability (though limited) for communication and information management. In some institutions, there was no staff member dedicated to information and communication management. In others, although staff members were technically competent in ICT applications, training in communication and information management were lacking. Institutions also lacked capacity for continuing development and maintenance of websites, resulting in little or no information exchange on these websites.
- 40 All reports indicated that institutions recognised the importance of using ICTs in information management. However institutions are at various levels in implementing ICTs. The Belize report indicated that ICTs are widely used for networking and communication. However one of its interviewees indicated that in Belize there needed to be greater awareness of the potential of ICTs in increasing organizational efficiency.¹² In Jamaica, the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (the major agricultural and rural development arm of the Government) operates a Wide Area Network (WAN) island-wide connecting its 12 branch offices. However each rural branch office has only one computer, therefore limiting the full potential that such a WAN can offer.¹³

¹² *Belize Country Report. Table 4.1.1*

¹³ *Jamaica Country Report. Paragraph #39 and 57*

- 41 Guyana¹⁴ and St. Lucia¹⁵ are examples of countries in which institutions without access to updated ICTs and trained human resources are challenged in pursuing information management. While there was recognition of the need for greater application of ICTs in information management, the resources to move forward were lacking.
- 42 Attempts are being made to introduce ICTs to the wider rural communities. One such example is to be found in St. Lucia where both the Government and the National Research and Development Foundation are providing ICT equipment for the use of rural residents. In the case of the National Research and Development Foundation, Internet cafés have been established for the use of clients (producer groups and other groups including those of women and youth). The St. Lucian Government has also established Learning Resource Centres with basic ICT equipment in rural areas. In The Bahamas, although most of the farmers in the Family Island Communities have access to computers and the Internet, they are not networked. This is an obstacle for the Bahamas Produce Exchange which needs to collect additional data from this grouping to assist in its marketing thrust.
- 43 All reports indicated that training of human resources was needed. The suggested topics included all aspects of sourcing, collecting, organising, managing, publishing and disseminating of data and information, creation and management of computerised databases, use and application of ICTs in disseminating information, d strategies for devising information policies and for creating the demand for information. In addition, specialised training courses in agriculture were identified, for example Mari culture, management of community forestry programmes, identification of markets and trade opportunities and Geographical Information Systems.
- 44 All country reports indicated that perceptions of respondents was that information policies and strategies, [if they existed], were weak. As a result one of the disadvantages encountered was serious difficulty in locating, collecting, organising and disseminating data that was generated in-country. At another level there is need for basic programmes and workshops to demonstrate the need for information. For example, the Belize¹⁶ report stressed the need for introducing mechanisms which would assist in creating the demand for information among “technicians”. The culture of searching for and analyzing information is not widespread.¹⁷ From a similar perspective, the Antigua and Barbuda report identified that in some institutions “there was limited awareness and appreciation for the value of information and the role it plays in all facets of development”¹⁸. Confirming this situation in the context of Belize, this country report emphatically stated that “senior managers and policy makers need to be convinced of the need and advantages of having personnel specifically

¹⁴ *Guyana Country Report. Paragraph #21 and 42*

¹⁵ *St. Lucia Country Report. Paragraph #33*

¹⁶ *Belize Country Report. Table 3.0*

¹⁷ *Belize Country Report. 2.2*

¹⁸ *Antigua Country Report. Paragraph 3.2.3*

designated for information management. Unless this issue is addressed, addressing any of the other issues... will be wasted effort”.¹⁹

- 45 A common need that was identified in all reports was the need for computer equipment (printers and copiers), associated networking devices and audiovisual equipment.

¹⁹ *Belize Country Report. Table 4.1.1*

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Reports

46 It is evident that the key institutions in countries participating in the study are in need of assistance both in terms of information products and services and in building capacity for information and communication management. Consultants were asked to identify the extent of those “key problems” that were being addressed by CTA’s three operational programmes as well as any others outside the scope of these “key problem areas”. A synopsis is presented below; additional comments are provided as warranted.

Extract of CTA-Identified ‘Key Problems’ in the Caribbean Region: Breakdown by CTA Operational Departments

CTA DEPARTMENT	COMMENTS SUMMARISED FROM COUNTRY REPORTS
<i>Information Products and Services</i>	
Limited availability of publications that support decision-making in the agricultural sector.	All countries identified with this problem.
Shortage of relevant published information on agriculture and rural development, because of weak local publishing structure.	Yes, there is a shortage of relevant published information. At the national level, the Ministries of Agriculture are the main generators of published information and at best this is very weak.
Limited access to locally and externally published information on agriculture and rural development due to weak distribution infrastructure.	There is no formal distribution infrastructure within countries. The question of a weak distribution infrastructure should also be seen in context of arrangements made by the external generators of published information.
Limited awareness of the existing local and external sources of information and the type of products and services available.	All countries identified with this observation as far as the existing sources of local information and products and services available. As far as external sources are concerned, what was evident was that institutions had moved beyond awareness to the extent of having firm links with those external institutions which were working on similar programmes. Specifically in terms of CTA’s products and services, respondents reported limited awareness and in some cases no knowledge. Limited first-hand experience of pertinent developments in other countries and regions.

CTA DEPARTMENT	COMMENTS SUMMARISED FROM COUNTRY REPORTS
<i>Communications Channels and services Department</i>	
Limited contacts among ACP stakeholders and between the latter and experts from other countries and regions.	Yes. However some institutions had strong linkages with regional research institutions within the Caribbean. Others had developed linkages with personal contacts and institutions in other countries (mainly UK and US).
Weak networking services, such as newsletters, web sites, etc.	Yes. Maintenance of websites was a deficiency.
Limited first-hand experience of pertinent developments in other countries and regions	Yes
Limited use of ICTs for networking and dialogue.	Yes
Failure to take full advantage of opportunities for using radio, TV and other non-print media in communicating agricultural information and knowledge.	Yes
<i>Information and Communication Skills and Systems Department</i>	
Lack of expertise in the area of information and communication management (ICM) skills	Evident in all countries
Weak ICM policies and strategies	Evident in all countries. In some countries, the perception is that there are no such policies and strategies
Limited knowledge of the design of cost-effective and participatory ICM systems	Yes – in all countries
Limited management techniques for the implementation of ICM projects and services	Yes – in all countries

47 In addition to the above ‘key problems’, two other problems were identified and they warrant attention. These are:

- a. Limited awareness, appreciation and even recognition of the need for information and communication management systems by policymakers and administrators.
- b. Lack of the awareness of products, services and programmes offered by the CTA.

4.2 Recommendations by Country Consultants

48 The recommendations are grouped according to the focus of the CTA operational departments.

49 Information Products and Services

- a. Provision of technical information in terms of production systems (institution specific)

- b. Economic information (institution specific) but includes broader categories e.g. identification of markets, commodity profiles, crop insurance systems, trade requirements.
- c. Upcoming agricultural conferences and exhibitions, programmes executed by other agricultural networks
- d. Publication and distribution of one page summaries, leaflets and newsletters adapting contents to areas of local topics of interest.

50 *Communication Channels and Services*

- a. Generation and use of web pages for the dissemination of information
- b. Preparation of audiovisual material, radio and television programmes
- c. Introduction of a structure for information dissemination taking into account necessary cultural adaptations.

51 *Information and Communication Management Skills and Systems*

- a. Training in the application of communication technologies, management of information, report writing and editing, consolidation of information for specific target groups,
- b. Hands-on training on the importance, preparation and use of information policies and strategies.

4.3 Potential Partners

- 52 The country consultants have applied the criteria as defined by CTA for the selection of potential partners. A list of these partners is provided in Annex III.

4.4 Regional Coordinator's Conclusions and Recommendations for CTA

Conclusions

- 53 Seminars and study visits to promote the exchange of experiences between ACP experts and partners would benefit partners in the countries particularly in market-led development and increased agricultural production.
- 54 The CTA SDI service focuses on the provision of bibliographic records and abstracts for researchers. The focus of the QAS services is on the provision of responses to queries from the national agricultural communities while the local and national partnership complements the SDI and the QAS. Notwithstanding the availability of these services, there appears to be a gap in the provision of a service for other groups that require information that is consolidated, repackaged and adapted to particular cultural nuances for maximum effect. This need negates the effectiveness of mass produced end products for farmers without the inputs of cultural intermediaries.
- 55 In all institutions the need for an information policy and an accompanying information strategy was particularly evident. The preparation and

implementation of such a policy and strategy are critical to the success of any action for the improvement or even introduction of information and communication management.

- 56 All interviewees found that access to country-generated data and information was either unavailable, inaccessible or was not publicized by the sponsoring organization. Where the data and information were available, the possibility exists that ignorance about the source, conditions of access, and policy on dissemination of such information were prevalent among prospective users. (A template distributed under the CAIS programme was meant to help the generation of a directory to address this need).
- 57 Ministries responsible for the agricultural sector are recognized as main sources for domestic data and information by interviewees. However respondents indicated that this data is not always in an acceptable format for their use. The outreach services of the Ministries in some countries were seen to be deficient.
- 58 National, regional and international associations with a focus on specific crops were relied upon as major sources for information by researchers and members of the private sector working with these crops.
- 59 The Internet is an important medium for the identification of information sources and for networking with colleagues – where staff members have access to equipment.
- 60 Interviewees were generally not aware of the range CTA's products and services, except for Spore.
- 61 Technical information is required for a wide range of crops and programmes.
- 62 Respondents in the study identified the need for training programmes in all aspects of information management, in the applications of ICTs and in the production of audiovisual materials.
- 63 The lack of institutional and national recognition or awareness of the importance of information management to institutional development and the development of the national agricultural sector are detrimental to the development of the sector.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are structured according to the responsibilities of each of CTA's departments.

Planning and Corporate Services Department

- 64 CTA should select at least one institution in each country with which to work. In the first instance, it will be advisable that CTA selects the institution based on three criteria:
- a. the institution should actively interact and have outreach programmes with the target groups that are of prime concern to the CTA focus, namely, farmers, women, youth and the private sector;
 - b. one of the main goals of the institution should be strengthening relationships with farmers, women, youth and the private sector;
 - c. qualified human resources and adequate physical resources should be allocated to work with CTA to achieve mutual goals. The reason for this approach is to create an impact in as short a time period as it is possible to do so, utilizing limited resources at the disposal of CTA and the potential partner.
- 65 It appears that there is limited knowledge of CTA and its products and services among respondents in the “key institutions” despite the fact that some individuals in the Region have been recipients of publications, attended workshops and have participated in exchange visits. CTA therefore needs to develop mechanisms which will assist the Centre in maintaining visibility in the Region.
- 66 In the past, one or at the most two representatives from different countries have attended specific CTA workshops and seminars in the region. It is recommended that consideration be given to mixing the modus operandi to facilitate more training workshops in-country that will include all “key actors” in the sector. Such a step can assist not only in raising awareness of CTA but also by creating a nucleus of professionals for pursuing CTA follow-up activities in-country.

The Information Products and Services Department

- 67 A range of specific technical information needs (related to production and commodity profiles) have been identified in each of the country reports. These specific needs should be collated and matched to (a) relevant publications available from CTA and (b) to institutions within ACP countries that are working on similar agricultural programmes. The specific “key institutions” should be informed as soon as possible.
- 68 For those items of technical information that do not correspond to existing CTA products, contact should be made with these institutions directly by CTA or through the Regional Branch Office, CARDI in an effort to identify more clearly what is the “true” problem and for suggesting a follow-up strategy. It is important to make contact with these institutions as soon as possible to take advantage of the impetus gained through interaction with country consultants.

- 69 Locally generated information was identified as a need by all country reports. CAIS did provide a template for identifying such information at country level. However if respondents still identified this as a problem, there is a need for follow-up to find out if the template was used and if not why not. There may be other factors such as resources, policy and communication that need to be “brought to the table”. CTA and its Regional Branch Office could become the catalyst for further action that could assist in addressing this deficiency.
- 70 A regional “virtual” unit with a trained cadre of professionals (drawn from different countries) for writing and re-packaging of adapted versions of research findings for technicians in the field, extension officers, and farmers is recommended as a response to the need expressed by respondents in several countries. Responsibility for reprographic, printing and audiovisual services should be maintained at country level.
- 71 Functioning question and answer (QAS) services are currently operational in the following countries: Jamaica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Barbados. However these services need to be strengthened through the provision of additional trained personnel, computer equipment and up-to-date documentary resources. Only Jamaica has a qualified librarian attached to the service. The QAS is yet to become functional in Antigua, Belize, Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago.
- 72 In most if not all countries the Ministries of Agriculture are recognized as the most important source of information (with reference to published information and outreach advisory services). If the QAS services provided by these Ministries are to be effective then the resources for the service must be upgraded. There are two pre-requisites that should be met. At minimum this commitment should be demonstrated by a). The provision of physical resources (an adequate and visible location, dedicated hardware, software and an adequate annual budget) and (b). The assignment of a professional librarian or information specialist, a communications specialist and an information technology specialist. Unless personnel are adequately trained, the service provided will fall short of all expectation.
- 73 Unless there are institutions that are willing to demonstrate their commitment to the service by the assignment of trained personnel and the allocation of equipment and space, the service to be provided will not be of a high standard and will not serve the needs of users. In the past the Ministries responsible for agriculture were seen to be the only focal point for such a service. If during this study a “key institution” in the public or private sector is willing to demonstrate its commitment, then the establishment of a QAS should be explored with that institution in the interest of reaching the CTA target groups – farmers, women, youth and the private sector.
- 74 It is recommended that mechanisms be found through training attachments and workshops to assist in the establishment of facilities that would generate print and audiovisual materials (including posters). Ministries responsible for agricultural development were recognized as important custodians of

agricultural data and information. However it appears that the Ministry's dissemination of such information presents challenges in terms of formats for a range of end users both in terms of appropriate printed and audiovisual materials.

- 75 The generation of special alerts on upcoming conferences, workshops, meetings and trade and commodity information would satisfy a cross-section of key institutions in the study.

The Communication Channels and Services Department

- 76 The construction, use and maintenance of web pages will assist agricultural institutions in disseminating news and information.
- 77 Assistance in the establishment of national A/V centres for the preparation and dissemination of information to the farming communities will aid in the communication of important findings to this group. These centres will be complementary to the regional "virtual" community of writers recommended in paragraph #70.
- 78 Assistance in the establishment of rural telecentres in those countries with remote farming communities will provide an on-site two-way communication and networking mechanism for rural communities. Such centres have been established in Jamaica and St. Lucia. At another level, the farmers in The Bahamas do possess computer equipment however the Produce Exchange is at a disadvantage in collecting market data since there is no facility for networking these farmers.
- 79 Assist in linking commodity groups in each country to similar groups and networks in other ACP countries. Where these links are not already in place, this action will facilitate in broadening the range of information sources currently being consulted by these groups in the Region.
- 80 CTA should explore with national partners the introduction and strengthening of rural radio programmes (where these are already in production). Although there are many radio stations, it appears that this medium is not being fully utilized for the dissemination of information to farmers

The Information and Communication Management Skills and Systems Department

- 81 Practical assistance should be provided to key institutions identified in each country for the formulation of institutional information policies and strategies. Sensitization seminars should be held in each country to be followed by hands-on pilot projects and pilot demonstrations to the wider agricultural sector. CAIS has conducted studies, produced and disseminated several templates and guidelines over the last three years. These publications need to be updated and in selected cases should now become part of a working manual for devising an institutional information policy and strategy.

- 82 Several training courses to build capacity for information and communication management are required. Within the last three years, CTA and CARDI have sponsored several such courses as part of the CAIS programme. However many of these courses have been conducted at the regional level with one representative from each country in attendance. It is hardly likely that one person will be able to implement all that is imparted at such courses on return “home”.
- 83 It is recommended that CTA and CARDI explore mounting such courses at the country level where there may be more opportunities to start some level of commitment as a follow-up to the goals of the particular workshop. The reports from Antigua and Barbuda and Belize specifically mentioned that in the field, the consultants noted that at some levels in the community there was a noticeable lack of desire or impetus in even recognizing the pivotal role of information as an asset in advancing work programmes. This situation is likely to occur to varying degrees in all of the countries. Hands-on workshops and the introduction of case studies which address advantages and pitfalls in information use and application to problems should assist these countries to address this issue.
- 84 There is limited marketing and promotion of information services and products. Practical programmes are required to address this issue – programmes that are focused on this topic, and not a presentation that is a part of another topic.
- 85 Working manuals and guides should be formulated and/or adapted for the Caribbean Region to accompany information and communication management courses, in addition to papers and other presentations.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE

ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION NEEDS IN AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN & PACIFIC (ACP) STATES: Caribbean

1. Introduction

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) was established in 1983 under the Lomé Convention between the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States and the European Union Member States. Since 2000, it has operated within the framework of the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement.

CTA's tasks are to develop and provide services that improve access to information for agricultural and rural development, and to strengthen the capacity of ACP countries to produce, acquire, exchange and utilise information in this area. CTA's programmes are organised around three principal activities: providing an increasing range and quantity of information products and services and enhancing awareness of relevant information sources; supporting the integrated use of appropriate communication channels and intensifying contacts and information exchange (particularly intra-ACP); and developing ACP capacity to generate and manage agricultural information and to formulate information and communication management (ICM) strategies, including those relevant to science and technology. These activities take account of methodological developments in cross-cutting issues (gender, youth, information & communication technologies – ICTs, and social capital), findings from impact assessments and evaluations of ongoing programmes as well as priority information themes for ACP agriculture²⁰.

In January 2002, CTA's Strategic Plan (2001-2005) was implemented and CTA's activities were distributed among three operational programme areas / departments:

- Information Products and Services
- Communication Channels and Services
- Information and Communication Management Skills and Systems

These operational departments are supported by Planning Corporate Services (P&CS) which is charged with the methodological underpinning of their work and monitoring the ACP environment in order to identify emerging issues and trends and make

²⁰ Priority information themes for ACP agriculture have formed the basis of various several studies, workshops and seminars bringing together various stakeholders, organisations and institutions active in the field of agriculture and rural development. The documents (or extracts thereof) will be provided to the consultants.

proposals for their translation into programmes and activities. This current exercise, therefore, falls within the mandate of P&CS.

2. Background

A comprehensive regional information needs assessment was undertaken in the Caribbean region, by CTA and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), over the period 1995-1997. This study detailed the information needs, habits and priorities, of eleven sub-groups of users relevant to the agricultural and rural development sector, presented in sixteen national reports and a regional overview. The results of the studies were followed by a series of national consultations, missions and regional meetings, as well as pilot studies in information and communications management all aimed at arriving at or designing a strategy to meet information needs within the sector. The strategy proposed the development of a Caribbean Agricultural Information Service (CAIS) with a two pronged approach to improving access to information within the Caribbean region:

- Working with institutions at the national level to improve capacity in various aspects of information and communication management (e.g. network development, training, sensitisation).
- Developing information products and services to meet specific information needs identified.

The CAIS strategy has been implemented since 2001. A number of capacity building exercises were executed including workshops and training courses; provision of technical assistance; network development, policies and systems. Since the implementation of this strategy in 2001, there have also been a number of changes within institutions in the region with respect to their awareness and use of information and communications tools and technologies.

3. Main issues

CTA works primarily through intermediary organisations and partners (non-governmental organisations, farmers' organisations, regional organisations, ...) to promote agriculture and rural development. Through partnerships, CTA hopes to increase the number of ACP organisations capable of generating and managing information and developing their own information and communication management strategies. The identification of appropriate partners is therefore of primordial importance.

The "Evaluation of the Implementation of the Mid-Term Plan (1997 – 2000)" emphasised the need for CTA to develop a more pro-active approach and elaborate criteria for decision-making with regard to the choice of partner organisations and beneficiaries. Based on this evaluation, the "Strategic Plan and Framework for Action – 2001 – 2005" identifies strategic issues for CTA being: improved targeting (including partnerships and beneficiaries), geographical coverage, decentralisation, regionalisation and thematic orientation. The Plan also expresses concern about: the extent to which CTA's activities are relevant to and reach the poor, gender awareness and how to identify potential partners especially in the independent sectors.

Besides partner identification and selection issues, the observation has also been made that, the Caribbean region could benefit further from CTA's programme and activities. Finally, various national and regional partners with whom CTA has had a long-standing relationship have requested the current study which would serve to update the earlier studies done and allow them to provide more targeted assistance to their beneficiaries.

4. Objectives and scope of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- to identify agricultural information needs of key actors/beneficiaries for CTA products and services;
- to identify needs of potential actors/beneficiaries of CTA activities and services in terms of building capacity for information and communication management;
- to identify potential partners / beneficiaries for CTA activities and services;
- to develop some baseline data to facilitate subsequent monitoring activities.

The study should assist the three operational departments of the CTA as well as its local representatives to improve and better target interventions and activities aimed at potential partners and beneficiaries (including women, youth, private sector and civil society organisations); to have a more informed picture of their needs and aid in the elaboration of a strategy and framework of action. The study should also highlight where there are specific needs for CTA's products and services thereby enabling improvement in the delivery of the same.

5. Methodology

The consultant will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative rapid appraisal methods including:

- the desk review of available literature and information sources including the findings of programme evaluations;
- the conduct of face-to-face interviews with relevant stakeholders/concerned parties;
- the limited use of questionnaires.

The rapid appraisal approach will allow a general overview of the key issues and company /organisational profiles on a per country²¹ basis and may give rise to more in-depth studies as and when needed in the future.

6. Expected outcomes/output

One main report per country not exceeding 20 pages according to the following table of contents:

²¹ Out of 16 countries comprising the Caribbean ACP, only selected number will initially be the subject of studies, with domestic consultants conducting country-specific assessments. Country selection will be done by CTA on the basis of specific criteria.

Main report

1. Executive summary
2. Introduction
3. Country profile – summary structure and economic characteristics with particular attention to agricultural sector (includes fisheries and forestry):
 - Summary of how agriculture, fisheries and forestry is organised in the country
 - Summary of the information and communication management capacity
 - The current source of agricultural information and services (synthesise Annex 3)
4. Needs analysis
 - Information needs
 - Capacity building needs (skills, training, media, ICT, equipment)
5. Conclusions and recommendations
6. References

Annexes

1. *Terms of reference*
2. *Country profile*
 - 2.1 General agricultural profile (from available documentation)
 - Size of agricultural population (male/female/youth)
 - Farmed land, forests, fishing areas
 - Agricultural systems
 - Agriculture in the economy (percentage GDP)
 - Main agricultural produce and secondary products
 - Main export markets
 - Trade agreements that include agriculture
 - Sectoral policy related to agriculture, fisheries and forests
 - 2.2 Socio-economic profile (from available documentation)
 - Total active population, demographic breakdown
 - Literacy level and languages
 - Access to services (health, schools, electricity)
 - Rural urban drift
 - 2.3 Media and telecommunications (update / check)
 - Newspapers, periodicals, magazines, radio stations, television channels,
 - Telecommunication services (fixed, mobile, etc.)
 - Computers and Internet access
3. *Profile of institutions*
 - List of all institutions involved in agriculture and rural development activities, including private sector and civil society organisations, with name, contact details, type and role of institution
 - Select list of key institutions involved in agriculture and rural development, with extensive data and information on the institution, the problems faced and why it is considered a key actor

It is also expected that the results of this study will lead to identification/update of some priority agricultural information themes which will feed into a possible priority-setting exercise in the region in 2004.

7. Reporting

The country reports will not exceed 20 pages (excluding annexes). The annexes should include a list of acronyms, of persons/institutions interviewed with addresses, phone, fax numbers, e-mail addresses (if any) as well as bibliography.

8. Timing

- Draft final report is to be submitted within three months after contract signature by CTA
- Final report due two weeks after receipt of comments from CTA.

9. Expertise

Consultant	Country
Mrs. Roberta Williams & Mrs. Sue Evan Wong	Antigua & Barbuda
Mr. Kelvin Craig	Guyana
Mrs. Luvette Thomas-Louisy	Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Mr. Steve Maximay	Trinidad & Tobago
Mr. Ricardo van Ravenswaay	Suriname
Mr. Godfrey Eneas	The Bahamas
Mr. Stevenson Skeete	Barbados
Mr. Conrad Smikle	Jamaica
Citrus Growers Association	Belize
Mrs. Barbara Gumbs	Regional Coordinator, Overview report

The expert should have a university degree or equivalent by experience. In addition, he/she should have at least 10 years experience in field of agriculture, rural development or social/economic sciences. He/she must have in-depth knowledge of the agricultural sector in his/her country and be able to identify key players and institutions/organisations active in this area. The ability to communicate and write clearly in English is essential, while knowledge of at least one of the local languages for communication/interview purposes is an added advantage.

The overall coordination will be carried out by Ms Christine Webster, Deputy Head, Planning and Corporate Services CTA, assisted by Mrs Lola Visser-Mabogunje, Project Assistant.

10. Implementation schedule (CTA)

- Preparation/Finalisation of ToR; Identification/ short-listing of (potential) consultants; Call for offers: February – October 2004
- Selection of consultants & contractual arrangements: October 2004
- Briefing: 3 – 4 November 2004
- Start date of contract: 2 November 2004

- Implementation period: 3 November – 1 May 2005
- End date of contract: 1 May 2005

11. Key documents to be made available to consultants

Documents include:

- Cotonou Framework Agreement
- Excerpts of relevant sections of CTA's Strategic Plan and Plan of Action (2001-2005)
- Annual Reports
- Documents on priority information themes identified for the Caribbean region
- Documents on products & services provided by CTA
- Information Needs Relevant Country and Regional Reports 1997
- CAIS Stakeholders Meeting Reports

12. Role of Regional Coordinator

- Respect the timeframe as specified in Annex IV (regarding submission of reports)
- Help identify and vet country consultants
- Attend briefing meeting in Trinidad
- Review the terms of reference
- Finalise questionnaires and methodological approach after due consultation with CTA Team
- Draw up briefing notes and guidelines for local consultants to ensure accurate and consistent application of the agreed methodology in data collection
- Answer queries (technical & otherwise) of local consultants
- During the studies, monitor and provide technical assistance to the local consultants
- Review preliminary country reports and findings and send comments back to local consultants
- Coordinate and ensure consistency of country reports
- Prepare the overall report taking into account the findings and recommendations of all the Caribbean country reports (table of contents to be agreed).

13. Role of Local Consultants

- Respect all the timeframe as specified in Annex IV (regarding submission of reports)
- Attend briefing meeting in Trinidad
- Familiarise themselves with background documents received from CTA; including the Terms of Reference
- Undertake desk study and prepare country profile, list of institutions involved in agriculture as well as preliminary list of select institutions.
- Undertake field visits in country specified in the contract
- Conduct interviews and gather information in country specified in the contract
- Draft preliminary country reports and send to Regional Coordinator for initial comments

- Based on comments received from Coordinator, revise country reports and send draft final report to CTA within the specified timeframe
- Finalise country reports based on comments and observations received from CTA and send final report back to CTA

14. Role of CARDI

- Assist in the identification and vetting of Local Consultants
- Provide input and feedback for the Terms of Reference
- Make all the logistical arrangements (flights, hotel, venue of meeting, etc) for the briefing session
- Participate in the pre/briefing sessions (in Trinidad)
- Provide backstopping for the Regional Coordinator
- Liaise with CARDI and Regional Coordinator throughout the study
- On receipt of the draft and final reports give comments and observations to the Regional Coordinator with copy directly to CTA

15. Role of CTA

- Draw up initial Terms of Reference and prepare relevant background documents
- Appoint the Regional Coordinator and the ACP Local Consultants
- Attend briefing meeting of consultants in Trinidad
- Liaise with CARDI and Regional Coordinator throughout the study
- Invite the Regional Coordinator and Local Consultants for Briefing Meeting
- Provide input to the Regional Coordinator with regard to fine-tuning terms of reference, questionnaires, interview guide and reporting guidelines for the consultants
- Provide relevant background documents to the Local Consultants & Regional Coordinator
- Elaborate budget and discuss contractual obligations with the Team of consultants & Regional Coordinator
- Pay invoices for services rendered in a timely manner on condition that all payment conditions are fulfilled
- Overall responsibility for the supervision and implementation of the studies
- Bear the agreed costs of expenditure in respect of the study (economy class return tickets to Trinidad, hotel accommodation and subsistence allowances during briefing meeting, or during agreed and specified field visits)
- Provide feedback and comments on draft country reports to the Local Consultants
- Give feedback to the Regional Coordinator on the overall report

ANNEX II. STATED THEMES OF AGRICULTURAL POLICIES FROM COUNTRY REPORTS

	Antigua/ Barbuda	Bahamas	Barbados	Belize	Dominica	Guyana	Jamaica	St Kitts/ Nevis	St Lucia	St Vincent/ Grenadines	Suriname	Trinidad And Tobago
Diversification of the agricultural sector (including value added commodities)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased Competitiveness			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Enhancement of food security		✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Expansion of trade/exports			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased employment/ development of farmers, women, youth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustainable development			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Strengthening of strategic alliances at the national, regional and international levels				✓	✓							✓
Development of information support systems				✓			✓			✓	✓	
Increased technical support to farming communities				✓			✓				✓	
Commodity specific development and expansion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Government as facilitator											✓	✓
Development of capacity to exploit developments in biotechnology												✓
Import substitution											✓	

ANNEX III. POTENTIAL PARTNERS RECOMMENDED BY COUNTRY CONSULTANTS

COUNTRY/INSTITUTIONS	TYPE	ROLE
ANTIGUA		
The Agricultural Extension Division of the Ministry of Agriculture	GOV	PP
Environment Division of the Ministry of Public Works, Telecommunications and the Environment	GOV	EX, IN, RG
Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture	GOV	EX, IN, RG
The Environment Awareness Group	NGO	EX, IN, RD
BAHAMAS		
Bahamas Cooperative League (BCL)	NGO	RG
Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation (BAIC)	STA	EX, IN, FS, RD, TR, TM
Bahamas Agricultural Producers' Association (BAPA)	AS-F	PS-P
BARBADOS		
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MAR)	GOV	EX
BELIZE		
Agriculture Department, Faculty of Science and Technology: University of Belize	EDU	EX, IN, FS, TR, RD
Citrus Growers Association (CGA)	AS-F	EX, IN, FS, PP, RG, RD, TR, TM, RU
Citrus Research and Education Institute (CREI)	NGO, AS-F	EX, IN, PP, RG, TR
DOMINICA		
Dominica Export and Import Agency (DEXIA)	STA	EX, PS-E, TR, TM
Dominica Banana Producers Limited (DBPL)	PSE	EX, TM,

COUNTRY/INSTITUTIONS	TYPE	ROLE
GUYANA		
National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI)	STA	RD, TR, PP, EX
Guyana Marketing Corporation (New GMC)	STA	EX, IN PP, RD, RG, TR, TM
Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED)	STA	EX, IN, PP, RD, RG, TR, TM
JAMAICA		
Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA)	STA	EX
Christmas Potato Growers Cooperative Association (CPGCA)	AS-F	EX, TM
Jamaica Agricultural Development Foundation (JADF)	PRV	EX, TR
Jamaica Livestock Association	AS-F	EX, PS-S
ST KITTS AND NEVIS		
Central Marketing Corporation (CEMACO)	STA	TM
Small Enterprise Development Institute (SEDU)	STA	EX, IN, RD
St Christopher's Heritage Society (SCHS)	NGO	IN, OT
ST LUCIA		
St Lucia Agriculturists' Association (SLAA)	AS-F	PS-S
Windward Islands Banana Development Company (WIBDECO)	PRV	PS-E, RG
National Farmers Cooperative Credit Union (NFCCU)	AS-F	FN
ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES		
St Vincent Banana Growers Association (SVBGA)	AS-F	EX, PP, TM
Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU)	GOV	IN, RD, TR
National Properties Limited (tentatively recommended)	STA	TM

SURINAME

Centre for Agricultural Research in Suriname (CELOS)	EDU	EX, RD, TR
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries	GOV	EX, IN, PP, RD, RU, TR, TM
Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KMF)	CCI	IN, IM
Bureau Forum NGOs	NGO Network	EX, IN, RU/TR/TM
Anton de Kom University of Suriname (ADEK)	EDU	RD

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago (ASTT)	AS-F	EX, IN, RU
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Key:

Type		Role	
AS-F	Farmers' association (includes co-operatives)	EX	Extension and outreach
AS-W	Women's association	IN	Information services
AS-Y	Youth association	FS	Financial services
BNK	Bank or credit institution	PP	Policy and planning
CCI	Chamber of commerce and industry	PS-E	Private sector – Exporter (fresh, frozen and dried produce)
CHU	Church-based group	PS-M	Private sector – Manufacturer (e.g. tannery, bottler, refiner, roaster)
EDU	Educational institution	PS-P	Private sector – Producer (e.g. commercial farm, fishing company)
GOV	Government department/ministry	PS-S	Private sector – Supplier (e.g. ag. chemicals, equipment, seeds)
NGO	Non-government organisation	RD	Research and development
PRV	Private enterprise, company	RG	Regulation (compliance, standards)
REG	Regional organisation, project or network	TR	Training (at secondary, tertiary and vocational level)
STA	Statutory body	TM	Trade and marketing (include market development)
STE	State enterprise	RU	Rural Development
OTH	Other	OT	Other

ANNEX IV. REFERENCES

*Assessment of Agricultural Information Needs in African, Caribbean & Pacific (ACP) States: Country Reports*²²

Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation 2001b. *Strategic Plan and Framework for Action 2001-2005*. Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation 2004b. *CTA Draft Programme of Activities 2005*. Wageningen, The Netherlands, June 2004.31p

²² Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago