

## **4 innovation trends in the banana and pineapple industry to promote biodiversity in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, supported by GFA Consulting Group and GIZ**

**March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.** 30 is the number of winning projects of the contests of ideas 2020-2021, organized by the "From Farm to Fork" Program aiming at positioning and integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into banana and pineapple value chains in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica.

"As projects are getting implemented, we assess the benefits they bring to the environment and the business as well as the challenges coming along. This is valuable information for scoping the project and scaling up initiatives," says Emilie Dardaine, team leader at GFA Consulting Group GmbH, the German consulting firm that coordinates the projects for GIZ.

The contests' success and the interest in biodiversity was outstanding. Almost 100 projects proposals from small and large banana and pineapple farms in both countries were received. Through these contests, 4 thematic areas stand out in the innovative initiatives for a more sustainable production that promotes biodiversity:

- 1. Biological corridors that provide wildlife with safe passage between discrete conservation areas.** Areas are planted within or around production zone with native trees and plants. Fauna monitoring is performed using trail camera and applying a robust statistical sampling methodology. Action plans for their conservation and protection are developed. Environmental education to companies' staff and the community is carried out. And value is added to the fruit as it is associated with wildlife protection.
- 2. High Technology applied to agriculture industry:** Drone technology is used to map farms, to make inventories of the biodiversity and to precisely apply agro-inputs to the field. The selection of optimal agrochemical products according not only to the plant needs but also to market and certification requirements is facilitated by a mobile App. Weather stations are installed as a tool for precision agriculture to increase efficiency, sustainability, and profitability.
- 3. Reducing agrochemicals impact on biodiversity:** Biological filtering systems called *Biobed*, are installed where pesticides application equipment is filled in and cleaned. Organic inputs made of waste such as chicken and cow manure mixed with medicinal plants, microalgae, or other materials, increase crop resistance against pest and diseases.

Proyecto



Implementado por



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



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4. **Measurement and reduction of water and carbon footprints:** Footprints are calculated using the platform developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It allows to increase production efficiency, improve water resources management, decrease carbon emissions, and finally differentiate the fruit at market level.

The winning initiatives of the contests of ideas 2020-2021 to promote biodiversity are supported by the "From Farm to Fork" Program, with funding ranging from US\$10,000 to US\$25,000 per project. Let's emphasize producers' commitment to implement these projects: they are contributing with their own capital that may more than double the amount of the sponsorship!

The winning farms are large companies such as Chiquita, Del Monte, Dole, medium-sized companies like Costa Rica Fruit Company, Nicoverde, Varcli Pinares, Piñas Cultivadas, Upala Agrícola, Universidad Earth, Yellow Pallets, Agropiñas del Caribe, Rancho Carlos, SAVID Dominicana and farmers' associations like BANAMIEL, ASOPROPIMOPLA, BANELINO and COOPPROBATA, among others.

According to Eduardo de la Cruz, AZUABANA Manager, an organization of small banana producers and another winner based in the Dominican Republic, "The "From Farm to Fork" Program has contributed to make our association an example in raising environmental awareness and managing environmental issues." showing that this kind of project is a great tool to enhance biodiversity, not only through actions for a sustainable production and natural resources optimization but also through environmental education.

The "From Farm to Fork" Program is implemented by the German development cooperation (GIZ) and funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of The German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The political partners are the Ministry of Environment and Energy in Costa Rica (MINAE) and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in the Dominican Republic (MIMARENA).

### Other sources of information

<https://www.facebook.com/biodiversidadynegociosgiz>

[https://www.delcampoalplato.com/es/home\\_esp/concurso-del-ideas/](https://www.delcampoalplato.com/es/home_esp/concurso-del-ideas/)

Attached, are illustrative pictures, owned by GFA.

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