

# Beneficiary Assessment Report

10th EDF Regional Private Sector Development Programme  
2011-2016



C A R I B B E A N  
**EXPORT**  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CARIBBEAN  
**EXPORT**  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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# OUR VISION

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TO OPTIMISE THE  
CARIBBEAN REGION'S  
EXPORT POTENTIAL  
THROUGH FACILITATING  
INNOVATION AND THE  
CREATION OF WORLD  
CLASS BRANDS CAPABLE  
OF SUCCESSFULLY  
COMPETING GLOBALLY.



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Annex 1: List of beneficiaries participating in the 10th EDF RPSDP assessment

Annex 2: List of countries where beneficiary's products or services are exported

Annex 3: List of programme activities participated in by beneficiaries

## List of Acronyms

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BSO	Business Support Organisation
CARIFORUM	Forum of the Caribbean Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
DAGS	Direct Assistance Grant Scheme
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FCORs	French Caribbean Outermost Regions
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
OAS	Organization of American States
OCTs	Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union
WOMEX	World Music Expo

# Introduction

During the period April - June 2016, the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) undertook an assessment of beneficiaries who participated in the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP). The overall purpose of the mission was to assess the value of the 10th EDF RPSDP as perceived by beneficiaries, and to integrate findings into future programme activities. Specific objectives of the assessment were:

- To evaluate the extent to which the 10th EDF RPSDP has contributed to economic growth - specifically increased export sales and revenue - within 75 select beneficiary firms, and by extension the sectors within which they operate.
- To assess the benefits achieved and challenges encountered by these firms as they sought to export to new regional and international markets.

The method of beneficiary selection for this assessment was stratified random sampling. During the period 2011-2016, just over 6,000 SMEs participated in a variety of the Caribbean Export programme-based interventions. Of this figure, some 250 firms participated in at least three principal interventions, namely the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS); an export promotion platform, i.e. trade mission, trade fair, and a training and certification programme.

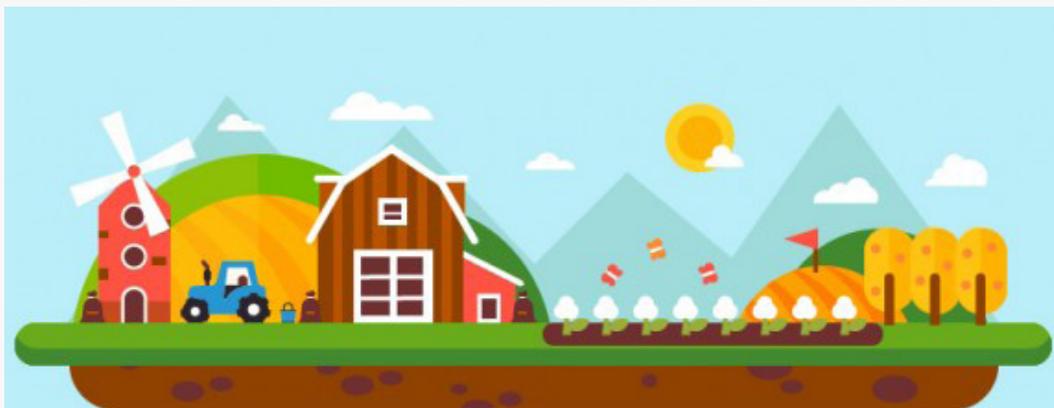
Using the stratified random sample method, the beneficiary group of 250 firms was divided into small groups clusters 'strata'. A random sample of 75 firms was then taken

from these smaller groups. The assessments targeted all 15 CARIFORUM States, which are beneficiary countries of Caribbean Export, as well as the nine priority sectors under the 10th EDF RPSDP. Triangulation was applied as the method of data collection, and consisted of in-depth interviews, online and telephone surveys, site visits, direct observation, and desk research.

In short, a review of this nature was designed to undertake systematic listening to beneficiaries by giving voice to their priorities, concerns, and achievements. It also presented an overview of the impact of the work undertaken by the Agency among select firms from the programme's priority sectors.

The activity was executed within budget and the timelines anticipated, however there were challenges related to ground transportation particularly in larger beneficiary countries. In future, coordination with Caribbean Export's focal business support organisation (BSO) in country could help facilitate this process. Further, these types of follow-up initiatives could have even greater impact if they are executed frequently, conducted by programme objective, and applied across a wider range of beneficiaries.

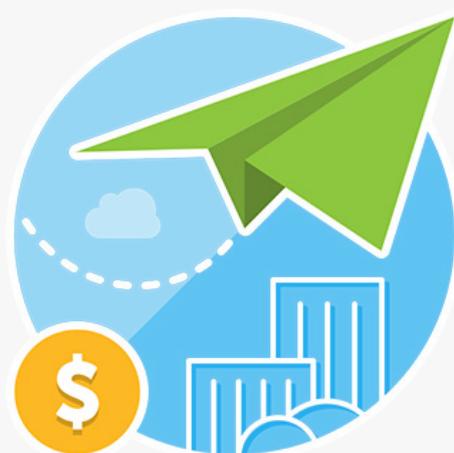
This report presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the assessment with a focus on three main areas: Major Findings & Analysis; Presentation of Data; Beneficiary Highlights & Testimonials; and Challenges & Recommendations.



36% of the beneficiaries responding to this assessment operate within the agro-processing sector



31 females participated in this assessment. Of this total, 90% are owners of their business, and the remaining 10% hold a management position



85% of the beneficiaries interviewed reported an increase in sales with a cumulative total of US\$8.1 million

# Major Findings & Analysis

A review of the activities undertaken within the framework of the 10th EDF RPSDP revealed that beneficiaries garnered a number of achievements and lessons following participation in a range of interventions. These include initiatives facilitating access to finance; entry into new markets; the creation of business linkages; and enhanced capacity through the delivery of training and certification programmes. There were also noteworthy findings related to gender roles (employment figures and employment levels) within these firms; job creation; and the availability of legal protection for products or services.

A total of 75 firms across 15 CARIFORUM States were selected for the assessment, 60 from 13 CARIFORUM States responded to the request. No responses were received from Belize, and St. Kitts and Nevis. Of these 60 respondents, 31 were female and 29 were male. It is important to note that of the 31 female participants, 90% are owners of their respective business, while the remaining 10% hold a management position within the company.

As it relates to the number of persons employed, 52% (31 firms) had a female employment rate of more than 75%, while only 3% of responding firms reported that females accounted for less than 25% of staff. Most of the firms participating in the assessment operate within the agro-processing sector (36%). This was followed closely by the creative industries (24%) and the manufacturing sector (21%).

All of the responding firms currently export their products or services regionally or internationally. Approximately 92% export within CARIFORUM, 50% to Europe, and 42% export to the United States (See Annex 2 for full list of export markets). Even with the high levels of exports, at least 25% of firms do not currently have any form of legal protection for their goods or services, thereby making them susceptible to various forms of infringement. Further, Corporate Registration is the most popular form of protection applied by firms.



On the matter of engagement with Caribbean Export, 46% of beneficiaries made initial contact through their local BSO, namely the Manufacturer's Association, Export Promotion Association or Investment Promotion Agency. However, 35% noted that they originally received direct contact from the Agency via staff members, and another 27% initiated engagement through the Caribbean Export website. Forty-six percent (46%) of the beneficiaries participating in the assessment first became a client of the Agency during the implementation of the 10th EDF RPSDP (2011-2015), indicating an increase in visibility for the Agency during the last 5 years.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the firms assessed benefitted from access to finance initiatives, namely the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme, Call for Proposals - Food Safety, and funding under the In-Firm Design and Branding Project. Moreover, 55% of them participated in an export promotion initiative; and 53% firms benefitted from training and certification programmes (See Annex 3 for full list of interventions).

In terms of programme outcomes, 85% of beneficiaries indicated that participation in Caribbean Export activities under the 10th EDF RPSDP contributed to an increase in sales for their firm. The combined total sales for these firms is approximately US\$8,133,500. Further, 82% were able to establish new business contacts, primarily through trade show involvement, business forum attendance, and study tour participation. Approximately 2% of firms also entered new international markets primarily in Europe, and North America, while 33% entered new regional markets in CARIFORUM, the FCORs, OCTs, and other Caribbean territories. Another notable result of the programme was the creation of jobs within 22% of the beneficiary firms. This led to a total of 55 full-time and 107 part-time positions being established.

Overall, beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the work being done by Caribbean Export, and cited their belief that the Agency is relevant to regional private sector development. However there was a call for more consistent and timely interaction with firms, particularly where in-market promotions are being undertaken, to ensure that the international destination selected for these promotions are a match to the products and services offered by regional firms. Grant recipients also expressed the need for more transparency, increased communication, and a more client-friendly approach to the reimbursement process. Additional comments and recommendations on programme planning and execution are available within the report.

# Presentation of Data

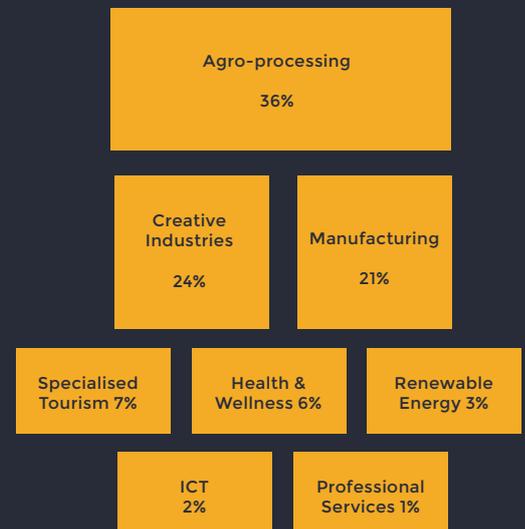
A total of 60 firms from 13 CARIFORUM States participated in the 10th EDF RPSDP Beneficiary Assessment; this is a response rate of 80%. The full list of beneficiaries is available at Annex 1 of this report. The following is an overview of the key results gathered during the review.

Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad & Tobago had the largest number of beneficiaries participating in the assessment. Together they accounted for 50% of the respondents.



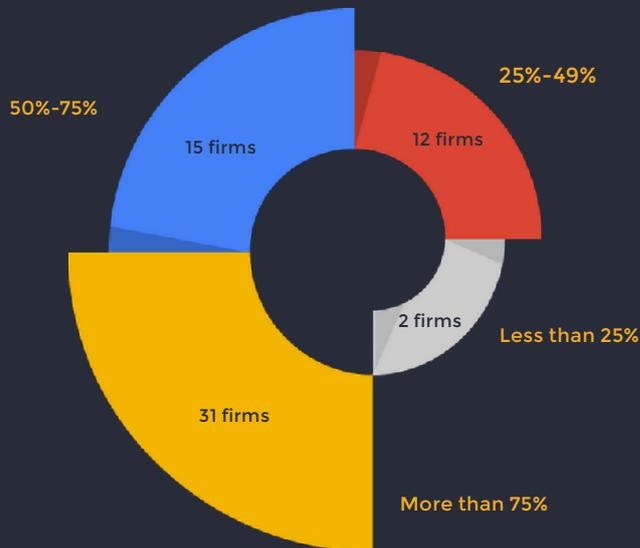
Gender disaggregated figures indicate that 52% of the beneficiaries were female-owned or managed firms.

8 of the 9 priority sectors were represented during the assessment. Agro-processing, creative industries, and manufacturing accounted for 81% of the overall total.



Of the total of persons employed within the beneficiary firms, approximately 52% of respondents indicated that more than 75%

of their staff complement was female. The overall rating of female employment is as follows:



All of the beneficiary firms participating in this assessment currently export their products or services. Regions targeted for export include CARIFORUM, the wider Caribbean, Europe, and North America, among others. Approximately 92% of the respondents export to other CARIFORUM States, while 53% export to a European country.

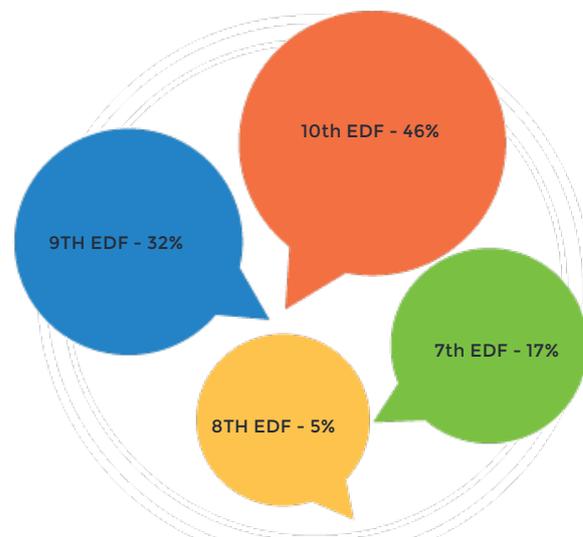


75% of respondents indicated that they have some form of legal protection for their products or services. The different types specified are: corporate registration, trademarks, product liability insurance, intellectual property, copyrights, and patents.



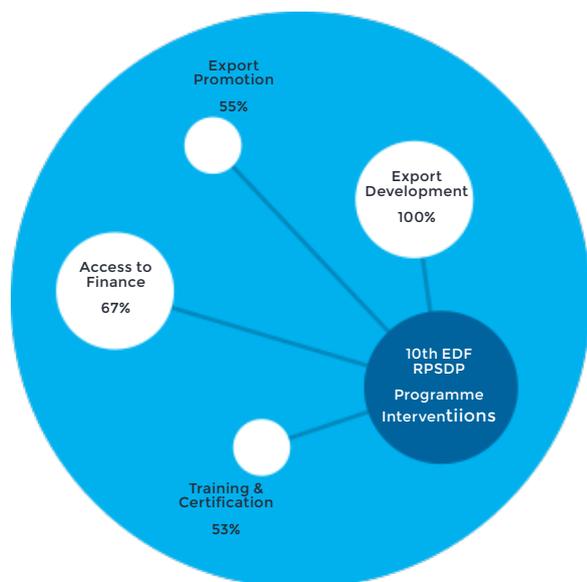
Beneficiaries shared that their engagement with Caribbean Export was initiated through a number of channels. Approximately 46% of respondents gained initial contact through assistance from their local business support organisation; 35% of beneficiaries received direct contact from the Agency which led to the commencement of on-going engagement; and 27% first had interaction with Caribbean Export through the Agency's website. Other modes of initial engagement included referral by a colleague/associate (25%), and traditional media (3%).

Forty-six percent (46%) of respondents also commenced engagement with Caribbean Export during the period 2011-2015 (10th EDF), while 5% of beneficiaries began their relationship with the Agency in 2001 (8th EDF).



During the implementation of the 10th EDF RPSDP, beneficiaries participated in a range of programme activities aimed at ultimately contributing to the gradual integration of CARIFORUM countries into the world economy and by so doing, enhance regional economic growth and by extension alleviate poverty.

Interventions were executed within six impact zones; for this assessment focus was placed on access to finance, export promotion, export development, and training and certification (See Annex 3).



Based on responses, 67% of firms benefited from access to finance initiatives; another 55% participated in trade fairs; 53% benefited from training and certification activities; 46% attended a business forum or conference; 29% participated in a study tour; and 25% undertook a trade mission.

A further analysis revealed that each of the 60 respondents participated in at least three programme interventions during the period under review.



A range of benefits was derived by firms, following their participation in programme activities. Five categories of achievements were selected for this assessment: increase in sales, new business contacts, entered new regional markets, entered new international markets, increased staff complement.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of the respondents revealed Caribbean Export's initiatives contributed to the establishment of new business contacts; 42% entered new international markets, while 33% entered new regional markets. Another accomplishment attained by firms was the ability to increase their staff complement, which was achieved by 22% of beneficiaries.

Additionally, all of the respondents who indicated an increase in sales (85% of the total figure), simultaneously recorded an increase in revenue from these sales. For this assessment, the rate of the increase recorded ranged from less than 25% to more than 75%. Approximately 43% of beneficiaries indicated an increase of less than 25%, while 8% specified an increase of more than 75%.





Beneficiaries were also asked to indicate whether they have gained an increased understanding of intra-regional and international trade agreements as a result of participation in the Agency's programme interventions; 36 firms responded 'Yes'. Of this figure, 72% revealed that they had 'gained more sector specific information on the benefits of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA', as well as a 'better understanding of how the agreement can work for their business'. Other areas of understanding included: CARICOM Single Market and Economy; Rules and regulations for the movement of goods; and the CARICOM-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Approximately 62% of beneficiaries shared that they gained new or increased knowledge on the regulatory standards for exporting to the

EU and other international markets. The main areas of improved knowledge are:

- Labelling requirements
- Product formulations and branding
- Packaging modifications
- Compliance with placement and disclosure of ingredients and other nutritional values
- Food Safety regulations and standards

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One hundred percent (100%) of respondents indicated that they believed Caribbean Export is relevant to regional private sector development. In particular, they lauded the Agency for being supportive of small businesses and women-owned enterprises. Of this total, 85% shared that they were satisfied with the products and services that are currently offered by the Agency. Further, 80% of beneficiaries are of the view that Caribbean Export adequately facilitates entry into the European and other international markets.

# Beneficiary Highlights & Testimonials

During the implementation of the 10th EDF RPSDP, programme beneficiaries cited a number of successes following participation in a number of initiatives. Some of the achievements related to breaking into new export markets,

improving the internal processes, increasing production capacity, and building capacity among staff to name a few. These and other outcomes are outlined as follows:



## Ruth's Place

Antigua & Barbuda

With the innovation and transformation to solar power within the hotel, Ruth Spencer saw not only an increase in her disposable income, but also greater visibility through the local media, which also resulted in a number of schools visiting the hotel to view and learn more about the project. Another major part of her success was engagement by the OECS Commission to participate in a number of regional consultations and workshops. Ruth also participated in

COP21, a sustainable innovation forum held in Paris, France in 2015, as a delegate with the Antigua and Barbuda Government. On return, she has since been able to co-host two national Renewable Energy consultations, which saw participation from members of the local utility company, the national solar installers, women, and youth groups, in addition to government technicians.

Ruth believes that her company's renewable energy practices is opening up new opportunities for other local and regional entrepreneurs, stating, "...it is a great and exciting time as all of my efforts are tied into national programmes, with the local government and other regional and international agencies providing incredible support. Caribbean Export has been the catalyst for much of my success, because they provided the financial and technical push I needed to make these innovative changes to my approach to business".

Number of new staff hired: 2

Percentage increase in sales: 55%



## Ridge Farms

### The Bahamas

Through support from Caribbean Export, Rionda Godet has been able to increase her company's production. Greater efficiency, improved quality and the adoption of innovative processes are the main benefits derived from the firm's engagement and relationship with the Agency. Most of these successes came via the DAGS received in 2011 and 2012, and Rionda credits them as the genesis to her company's product transformation. Medium to long-term outcomes of the projects undertaken with the DAGS funding included food safety certification, market research and testing, and the implementation of e-commerce solutions.

She further added that participation in the European Study Tour and the subsequent 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum in London served to complement the funding received by the Agency, as she gained valuable information on how to market her products to a diverse EU market, and meet the requirements for market entry.

Rionda was also able to connect with buyers and suppliers in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica as a result of attending the 6th CARICOM-DR Business Forum in Santo Domingo in

2012. She expressed appreciation to Caribbean Export by stating "the Agency's support to my firm has been priceless. They have done a great deal with a limited budget to assist regional entrepreneurs, and I am proud to be a part of a regional organization that is truly focused on the growth of the private sector, particularly firms owned by women".

Percentage increase in sales: 25%



## 10 Saints Brewery Co. Ltd

### Barbados

Glyn Partridge participated in Caribbean Kitchen @ANUGA in 2013 and 2015, which culminated in increased sales, and expansion into new export markets. Additionally, Glyn has been able to form a joint venture with Halewood International, which in turn led to increased brand prestige and awareness.

During the 2013 edition of ANUGA in Germany, he confirmed five 20ft container orders from buyers in Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia and Brazil. In 2015, Glyn continued to build on the success of previous participation, with exports to Denmark, Vietnam and Australia.

Glyn also shared “Caribbean Export contributed to my success through ANUGA. The exposure received from this initiative and subsequent publicity is invaluable, and for that we are incredibly grateful”.

Percentage increase in sales: 20%



## Fifth Element Designs

Barbados

Participation in the Study Tour to Europe, 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum, and Caribbean Essence @Gallery Berlin, Germany resulted in increased sales, the formation of new business contacts and entry into the EU market for Andrea King and her company. In relation to the Study Tour and Business Forum, she revealed that both were excellent initiatives and provided deeper insight into what was required for creatives seeking to enter the European market. Contact was also established with some of the regional participants and collaboration is on-going. During Gallery Berlin, Andrea was able to secure orders from a German buyer and a distribution offer from a company in Salisbury.

Percentage increase in sales: 5%



## Caribbean Agro Producers Corporation

Dominica

The assistance received via the DAGS programme from Caribbean Export has helped Caribbean Agro Producers Corporation to improve the internal food safety practices, increase productivity, and enhance the capacity of the company’s staff as it related to good manufacturing practices. Gail Defoe added that this support coupled with their improved ability to enter new markets in Guadeloupe, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and France, has successfully propelled the company into one of the world’s fastest growing industries - medical tourism. She lauded Caribbean Export and the EU for their commitment, citing that “this has made a big difference to not only my company, but also the wider community as there has been increased outsourcing among local farmers”.

Number of new staff hired: 3  
Percentage increase in sales: 45%



## Rodney's Wellness Retreat

Dominica

Lucilla Lewis commented, “as a direct result of funding we received under the DAGS, our marketing efforts became more dedicated and focused, as less time was required for recording basic sales transactions”. Further, she was able to quickly establish enhanced market presence, which in turn enabled the business to develop alliances and collaborative approaches with established operators in the tour sector; two of which are significant market players. Lucilla additionally noted that participation in various Forums and Symposiums provided the opportunity to delve deeper into some of the detailed provisions of the CSME and the CARIFOURM-EU EPA.

Percentage increase in sales: 50%

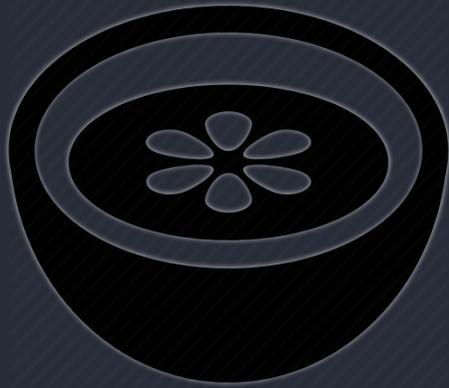


## Edward B. Beharry Co. Ltd.

Guyana

Raymond Ramsaroop commented that the support received from Caribbean Export, particularly, under the DAGS and Food Safety programmes, contributed in part to the company's increase in sales, and the improved capacity of staff. He noted that much of the increase in sales was as a direct result of marketing initiatives, but added that the improvements in the quality of the products being manufactured was based on the staff's enhanced understanding of food safety and good manufacturing practices gained during project implementation.

Percentage increase in sales: 10%



## Belzeb

Grenada & Haiti

Marie Roberte Laurent shared that the programmes she participated in with support from Caribbean Export resulted in increased sales, establishment of new business contacts, the ability to enter new regional and international markets, and increase her staff component. She further added that participation in export marketing and branding programmes enabled her to understand the value and importance of meeting labelling requirements, particularly as it relates to the EU market.

Marie Roberte also cited that the work undertaken by the Agency is extremely timely and relevant to small businesses like hers, adding that “Caribbean Export is an invaluable partner that has played a major role in my success, as 75% of the achievements I have had to date has come through support from the Agency”.

Number of new staff hired: 2  
Percentage increase in sales: 25%



## A.M. Frutas y Vegetales

Haiti

As a recipient of the Food Safety Grant from Caribbean Export, A.M. Frutas y Vegetales has been able to purchase of a new automatic washing and disinfecting line, and a filling and sealing line for the fruit purees”. Estefany Marte shared that since the implementation of these projects, the company has seen an increase in production output and sales.

The company’s staff has also been able to improve their internal food safety practices and procedures. She added that “Caribbean Export equipped our company with the resources needed to make innovative changes to our formulation and finalising processes, resulting in improved product quality and greater income”.

Percentage increase in sales: 10%



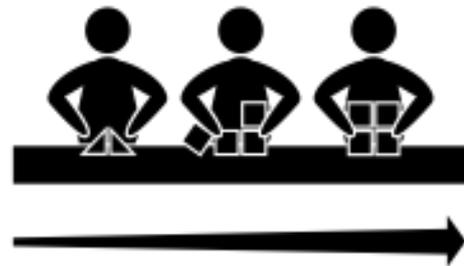
## A Taste of the Caribbean

### Jamaica

Participation in the DAGS, European Study Tour, the 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum, and Trade Mission to the Dominican Republic has culminated in a number of benefits for A Taste of the Caribbean Limited. During the Study Tour, Sonya Dunston was able to secure contacts with and subsequently orders from supermarkets and distributors in the UK and France.

The DAGS award allowed her to purchase much-needed filling, labelling, and filling equipment, which led to a reduction in production times, and enhanced product output. Improvements were also made to marketing and branding efforts, and this improved visibility of the company's products. Sonya shared that "Caribbean Export has helped me build my brand equity and enhanced my understanding of EU market entry. Today my company has grown, and I have been able to contribute to the development in my community as well."

Number of new staff hired: 6  
Percentage increase in sales: 80%



## Central Food Packers

### Jamaica

An increase in sales, development of new business contacts, and entry into new regional and international markets has been some of the medium to long-term successes achieved by Central Food Packers during the 10th EDF RPSDP. Natalie Grandison also cited improved business practices, increased production capacity, and more efficient, and accurate internal practices as other major achievements under the programme.

With funding under the DAGS, the company has automated the bottling line, and improved the packaging and shipping processes. Natalie shared that the Food Safety grant facilitated some of the biggest improvements within the company with the introduction of safety gear for employees, and the development of a food safety and food quality team under a newly appointed HACCP Coordinator.

Number of new staff hired: 5  
Percentage increase in sales: 30%



## Environmental Health Foundation

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Jamaica

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Increased sales, and entry into new regional and international markets were the benefits derived by Environmental Health Foundation through the DAGS programme. With improved marketing and branding, the company increased their direct exports to Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Montserrat and via a fulfilment centre, to the UK and Canada.

The focus on green-energy projects in the health and wellness sector resulted in improved product and service development, quality and environmental systems, staff capacity, and a reduction in the carbon footprint.

Percentage increase in sales: 10%



## Salada Foods Jamaica Ltd

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Jamaica

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Following participation in the Study Tour to Europe, the 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum and Export Marketing training, Salada Foods Jamaica Limited has seen increased sales, the creation of new business contacts, and entry in new international markets.

Since the Study Tour and Business Forum, Jerome Miles has been able to secure distributors in China, Barbados and Cayman Islands, resulting in increased export sales. He has also been able to gain greater understanding of the requirements for entering other Caribbean markets, such as the documentation necessary for intra-CARICOM trade.

Percentage increase in sales: 25%



## Seven Rivers Herbs & Spices

### Jamaica

The DAGS has allowed Seven Rivers Herbs and Spices to modernize the production equipment by moving from manual to automatic packaging, sealing, and labelling. As such the company's production capacity increased by 30% per week. Andrew McAlpin further shared that the grant was also used to enhance marketing efforts by improving the company's website and direct promotional activities.

Participation in the 3rd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum provided an opportunity for Andrew to gain insight into the EU market as it relates to market entry and best practices. Overall the company has seen increased sales, established new business contacts, expanded their US exports and gained entry into the UK market. Andrew shared his appreciation for Caribbean Export, at a time when funding is scarce for SMEs. He added "the Agency has done a fantastic job in not only providing access to funding, but also facilitating business linkages, and training opportunities for us as small business owners".

Number of new staff hired: 5 (part-time)  
Percentage increase in sales: 30%



## Southside Distributors

### Jamaica

Under the 10th EDF RPSDP, Southside Distributors Ltd. has made invaluable strides in the growth of the business. In addition to increased sales, market reach, and business contacts, Denese Palmer shared that she gained a better understanding of the requirements for export to the EU market, and improved business development capacity. During participation in Break Point, she learned how to attract more buyers to her firm and strengthen marketing efforts.

The funds received from the DAGS enabled Denese to purchase production equipment, which ultimately led to improved efficiency and quality control of products. The 3rd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum was the catalyst for entry into the UK market, as contracts were secured with two distributors. Denese noted that "Caribbean Export is seen as a valuable partner who has supported the export development of my business over the years, whether it is training, financial or technical assistance, the Agency has always sought to provide exemplary product and service offerings".

Number of new staff hired: 2  
Percentage increase in sales: 30%



## Baron Foods (St. Lucia) Ltd

### Saint Lucia

Baron Foods (St. Lucia) Ltd has been involved in numerous programme activities under the 10th EDF RPSDP. Overall, the company has seen incredible levels of success and growth, and Ronald Ramjattan credits Caribbean Export with being a major contributor to his achievements. Following participation in export promotion platforms such as Caribbean Kitchen @ANUGA, Expo Cibao, FIHAV, and Trade and Investment Convention, Ronald has established business contacts across the region and within international markets, increased his export sales and expanded the operations of his business to include Grenada and most recently Trinidad and Tobago. Most recently Baron Foods has been able to secure a distributor in Cuba, adding to his expansive market reach.

Involvement in the Study Tour to Europe and the CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum resulted in increased understanding of legislations that impact how his firm can maximize on the CARIFORUM-EU EPA, and the requirements for entering

European markets. Baron Foods has also benefitted from the receipt of grants under the DAGS, In-Firm Design and Branding project, and the Food Safety programme. With this assistance, internal processes have been modernized to improve efficiency, quality and production output.

The company has also gained certification in a number of food and quality management areas. Work has also been undertaken in upgrading the Baron's brand. Ronald shared "the work done by Caribbean Export is the push that firms need to enhance their competitiveness in the global market, but SMEs need to take the initiative and build on the momentum generated by this initial assistance. There are different levels of support provided, so everyone from start-up to well-established businesses have a chance to benefit".

Number of new staff hired: 5

Percentage increase in sales: 15%



## Desings by Nadia

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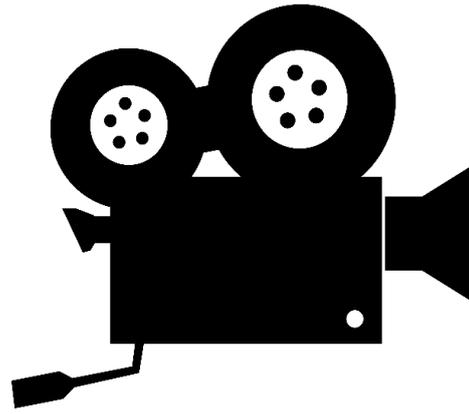
Saint Lucia

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Designs by Nadia has been a recipient of a Direct Assistant Grant, and participated in Design Caribbean on three occasions. In relation to the grant, Nadia Jabour shared that the funds were used to undertake branding and advertising initiatives in the form of trade shows in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Canada. This resulted in sales in the Barbados and Trinidad markets, as well as the establishment of business contacts.

Design Caribbean participation has also been a success for Nadia, particularly the staging during the Calabash Literary Festival, where the company sold all products on display. Nadia believes that Caribbean Export has done a lot in helping to build the company's brand equity and expand our professional networks".

Percentage increase in sales: 25%



## Lee Productions Inc

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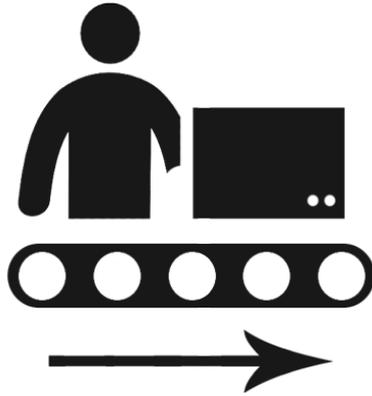
Saint Lucia

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Davina Lee participated in WOMEX, the Study Tours to Europe and 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum. During WOMEX, contacts were established with film and audio-visual producers from the UK, and Martinique. She was also able to secure music for her film 'The Coming of Org' from Producer Fred Jean Baptiste and his artiste Madniss.

Davina has also collaborated with Jean Baptiste on music videos and continues to work on increased collaboration between St Lucia and Martinique within the audio-visual sector. She added "my first attendance at WOMEX was a learning experience, seeing how things work in the world music arena, as well as how I fit in as a filmmaker".

Percentage increase in sales: 5%



## Viking Traders Ltd

Saint Lucia

Viking Traders Limited has seen year on year growth ranging from 15% to 75% as a result, in part, of the support received by Caribbean Export through the DAGS, Study Tour to Europe, and Caribbean Kitchen @ANUGA. With the grant funding, Viking upgraded to become fully automated, thereby increasing efficiency and production output.

Food Safety assessments have also been undertaken to ensure compliance with the requirements for manufacturing and export. Through ANUGA, Viking secured new business contacts and orders in Germany, British Virgin Islands, US Virgin Islands, and Martinique. Nicholas Zephrin shared that “Caribbean Export not only contributed to our company’s growth, but also helped us to support our local agricultural sector as they are our main providers of raw material”.

Number of new staff hired: None, but there was a 70% increase in staff wages

Percentage increase in sales: 25%



## Windward Pasta

Saint Lucia

Under the DAGS and Food Safety Grant programmes, Windward Pasta entered new regional markets: Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, improved company sales, and increased the staff complement by 116%. Rudy Gurley shared that the Food Safety project significantly improved the aesthetics of the plants, and the company’s capacity to meet the food production standards of the local, regional and international marketplace.

Subsequent to project completion, the company gained an investment of US\$600, 000 due in part to the upgrades that were in place. The DAGS grant was utilised to improve production capacity, which resulted in increased local demand and product output. Rudy commented “Caribbean Export helped me to improve my company’s competitiveness, break into the OECS market, and provided support for us to meet food safety requirements. Overall, the support has been more than adequate”.

Number of new staff hired: 5

Percentage increase in sales: 80%



## GOM Food Industries N.V.

Suriname

As a beneficiary under the DAGS, and participant in the European Study Tour as well as various trade missions, Kenneth Van Gom credits Caribbean Export with contributing significantly to GOM Food Industries' success. Benefits derived included an increase in sales, new business contacts, export to new regional and international markets, and increase in staff. The company experienced an increase in export sales to new markets in Curacao, Aruba, St. Maarten, Antigua and Barbuda, and Guyana.

Kenneth also had the opportunity to increase his understanding of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA, particularly as it relates to the rules and regulations for the movement of goods. He has further been able to adjust certain product modifications and labels based on EU market entry requirements. Kenneth shared that "Caribbean Export has given us the ability to expand the business and improve the overall performance resulting in higher local and export volumes, as a result of training, market research, financial, and technical assistance received, as well as trade fair and B2B participation".

Number of new staff hired: 5  
Percentage increase in sales: 15%

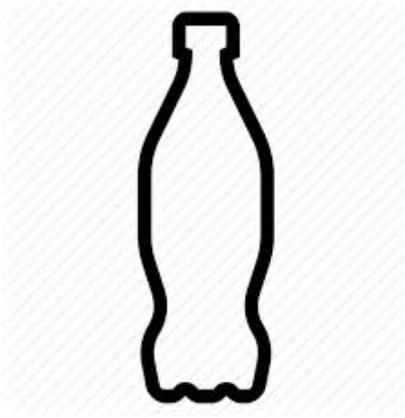


## SoRena's Winery

Suriname

Marjorie and Steven Renardus' participation in the Study Tour to Europe and the subsequent 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum in London led to greater engagement with regional agro-processors, increased understanding of the packaging and labelling requirements for the EU market, and enhancements in the quality of their productions. Fourteen (14) contacts were established during participation in Trade and Investment Convention, which led to wholesale and online purchases across CARIFORUM, and new market entry into Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.

Number of new staff hired: 3 (partime)  
Percentage increase in sales: 15%



## Fresh Start Limited

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Trinidad & Tobago

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With funding received under the DAGS, Fresh Start Limited has been able to increase production output, expand distribution locally, and build brand equity. The company has also seen a moderate increase in part-time staff given the renewed demand for the product locally. The internal improvements within the company have also helped them gain recognition at the national and regional level.

Marcus Sun Kow believes that Caribbean Export has given his company the jump-start needed to enhance their competitiveness, and adopt innovative practices. He added, “a lot of what we have done as a company, would not have been possible without the financial and technical support the Agency provided”.

Number of new staff hired: 6 (part-time)  
Percentage increase in sales: 5%



## Maturity Music Limited

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Trinidad & Tobago

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Jean Michel Gibert's participation in WOMEX 2011 was the genesis for the project, which he undertook with assistance from Caribbean Export through the DAGS. The funding was used to supplement the cost of producing an album for Calypso Rose, which has since led to increased publicity for the artiste in the UK, France, Belgium, Norway and Germany. This includes radio, television, and newspaper appearances, in addition to receiving booking requests to perform at various music festivals across Europe. Jean Michel believes that the contact made at WOMEX was the catalyst for what he has been able to achieve with support, in part, from Caribbean Export.

Number of new staff hired: 100 (part-time)  
Percentage increase in sales: 15%



## Meiling Inc.

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### Trinidad & Tobago

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Break Point and Caribbean Essence were two initiatives that were most beneficial to Meiling Inc. Sharleen Chin shared that the Break Point experience was phenomenal, as it helped the company to focus on key selling points and to attract potential investors and business partners. One of the investors at the finals in the UK also had a follow-up meeting with Meiling in Trinidad and Tobago and has provided invaluable advice on how to move the business forward.

Participation in Caribbean Essence @Gallery Berlin in 2013 resulted in making contact with a consultant who has been helping the company secure clients in Europe. Dominicana Moda was a good platform for international exposure, particularly to the US market, however Meiling's business model would have to be adapted to match that type of trade show expectation.

Number of new staff hired: 3 (part-time)  
Percentage increase in sales: 10%

# Challenges & Recommendations

The challenges shared by beneficiaries were primarily focused on export promotion activities and the DAGS reimbursement process. There were also a number of recommendations put

forward as a way to maximise the benefits and opportunities provided by the 10th EDF RPSDP. These are articulated below:

## CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum

The 3rd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum in Jamaica provided some very good content on the sector, a comprehensive overview of what was happening at the regional level, as well as a chance to learn from the industry present at the event. The networking opportunities were also seen as very beneficial as some contacts were established at the regional and international level.

However there was a sense by some participants that tangible business opportunities were not created, because many of the European firms participating were not a suitable match for regional businesses. Beneficiaries believe that this would have been more successful, and the suggestion was made for a **better selection of consultants** for planning this aspect.

Similar sentiments were echoed when it came to the organisation of visas and the **communication of travel requirements**, in particular the charge that some of this information was not made clear prior to travel.

## Direct Assistance Grant Scheme

Beneficiaries shared that there were a number of tangible benefits derived from the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS). They also cited that the grants are a tremendous tool for building capacity and improving the competitiveness of firms. Overall the DAGS is lauded as an innovative initiative, which has contributed to regional development, through individual assistance given to private entities.

However, there were significant challenges expressed, such as **reimbursement process, communication with the Agency, and securing loans for project implementation**. Some firms shared that the requirements for purchasing/sourcing materials and equipment for reimbursement is incredibly tedious and bureaucratic, and does not follow normal business practices. Adding that they are very paper-bound and does not improve the integrity of the procurement process.

Others charged that the reimbursement process is too time-consuming and tedious, and more open communication

is required from the Agency's project team throughout the process. It was suggested that a good model to consider would be that of the Competency Based Training Fund, where consultants are assigned to work with the firms during implementation, but also particularly when it comes to the proposal and claims process. Caribbean Export can either fund these consultants, or applicants can be encouraged to include these costs in their proposal submission.

Further, firms indicated that was extremely difficult, and in some cases illegal, to send Caribbean Export the original copies of financial documents, as there are needed for their own internal auditing purposes. They believe that there should be a way for the Agency to accept notarised/official copies.

Grantees were also unable to maximise the grant award because they were unable to secure a loan from the local EXIM or Development Bank. Many shared the belief that more commercial banks and financial institutions have to find ways to facilitate the private sector, especially if they are being supported by development initiatives.

### Export Development & Promotion

Participants cited World Music Expo (WOMEX) as an opportunity to re-connect with other regional artistes and musicians, as well as a chance to gain insight into what other artistes were doing across the region. However, the ability to connect with promoters and professional contacts was not fully realised and so it felt as though the week was not as successful as it could have been, in terms of tangible take aways from the experience.

Firms shared the opinion that Caribbean Export is doing an incredibly fantastic but difficult job at trying to facilitate export opportunities and increase the competitiveness of regional SMEs; because work is being hampered by **excessive CARICOM import duties** in some states, and the challenges of doing business in others. There are also issues surrounding **shipping rates, and logistical problems particularly in the air and sea ports.**

In relation Caribbean Kitchen, it was recommended that careful examination of firms be undertaken to ensure that the tradeshow is a 'right fit' for their product offering. Beneficiaries believed that far too often some of the **firms selected are not appropriate for the type of trade show they are attending**, which results in disappointment for them as well as opportunities lost for another potential participant. The suggestion was also made for the execution of more regional tradeshow, where serious buyers are researched, targeted, and brought to the Caribbean to do legitimate business.

Firms also shared the opinion that a lot of the work being undertaken by the Agency is potentially being sabotaged by the **high exporting costs we face as region.** This is compounded by third party logistic provider challenges, costs related to storage in international locations, and inconsistent tariffs. They acknowledged that Caribbean Export has little control over these aspects, but small businesses see these are detriments to any success they hope to achieve regardless of development support provided.

On a positive side, however, the impending Market Intelligence Portal is a welcome addition to the services provided by the Agency and it is hoped

that CARIFORUM States will play their part contributing data so that updates are timely, relevant and valuable.

Beneficiaries further shared that while a Study Tour was excellent for gathering market intelligence, a trade show is optimal for market entry. A **more consistent approach is needed with export promotion platforms**. Initiatives should see engagement with firms for at least 3-5 years (on an annual basis) so as to take beneficiaries through a graduation process.

Beneficiaries also commented that the support provided by the Agency is unmatched by any other local or regional entity. However, the **after-care with clients is seen as sorely lacking**. Engagement with beneficiaries has to move beyond a email blast, or a press release. There is very limited follow-up unless asked to complete a questionnaire, or we are being invited to submit an application to be a part of an initiative. Even then, it seems we are required to make up a quota, as there is no long-term support or relationship being built.

## ANNEX 1: List of beneficiaries participating in the 10th EDF RPSDP assessment

COUNTRY	BENEFICIARY	SECTOR
Antigua & Barbuda	Ruth's Place	Renewable Energy/ Specialised Tourism
Antigua & Barbuda	Ajeanté	Creative Industries - Fashion
Bahamas	Ilashan Apparel & Handmade Jewellery	Creative Industries - Fashion
Bahamas	Ridge Enterprises	Agro-Processing - Apiculture
Bahamas	Ternielle Burrowes	Creative Industries - Music
Barbados	10 Saints Brewery Limited	Light Manufacturing
Barbados	Blue Waters Productions/ SFA Communications	Creative Industries - Film
Barbados	Banks Holding Limited/ Beverages Caribbean Inc.	Manufacturing
Barbados	Copyright Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers Inc.	Creative Industries - Music
Barbados	Fifth Element Designs	Creative Industries - Fashion
Barbados	Simplified Apps	ICT
Barbados	WestToonz International	Creative Industries - Animation
Barbados	West Indies Biscuit Company	Manufacturing
Dominica	Rodney's Wellness Retreat	Health and Wellness/ Specialised Tourism
Dominica	Parry W. Bellot & Co. Ltd.	Manufacturing
Dominica	Caribbean Agro-Producers Corporation	Agro-Processing
Dominican Republic	A.M. Fruits and Vegetables	Agro-Processing
Dominican Republic	Procesadora Vizcaya	Agro-Processing
Grenada/Haiti	Belzeb Inc.	Health and Wellness
Grenada	Grenada Distillers	Manufacturing
Guyana	Edward B Beharry & Co. Ltd.	Manufacturing
Guyana	Mariska's Desings	Creative Industries - Fashion
Haiti	A.M. Frutas y Vegetables	Agro-Processing
Haiti	David Andre Collection	Creative Industries - Fashion

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COUNTRY	BENEFICIARY	SECTOR
Jamaica	A Taste of the Caribbean Ltd.	Agro-Processing
Jamaica	Bio Tech R&D Institute	Health and Wellness
Jamaica	Central Food Packers	Agro-Processing
Jamaica	Honey Bun (1982) Ltd	Manufacturing
Jamaica	Patwa Apparel	Creative Industries - Fashion
Jamaica	P.A. Benjamin Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	Manufacturing
Jamaica	Salada Foods Jamaica Limited	Agro-Processing
Jamaica	Seven Rivers	Agro-Processing
Jamaica	Southside Distributors	Agro-Processing
Jamaica	Wynlee Trading	Manufacturing
St. Lucia	Accela Marketing	Professional Services
St. Lucia	Baron Foods Limited	Agro-Processing
St. Lucia	Cinnamon Productions	Creative Industries
St. Lucia	Designs by Nadia	Creative Industries - Jewellery
St. Lucia	Iyanolla Pictures	Creative Industries - Film
St. Lucia	Lee Productions Inc.	Creative Industries - Film
St. Lucia	Natmed Limited	Health and Wellness
St. Lucia	Viking Traders	Manufacturing
St. Lucia	Windward Pasta	Manufacturing
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	The Master Room Studios	Creative Industries - Music
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Vincyfresh Limited	Agro-Processing
Suriname	Atelier Doré	Creative Industries - Jewellery
Suriname	GOM Food Industries	Manufacturing
Suriname	SoRena's Winery	Agro-Processing
Trinidad & Tobago	Fresh Start Limited	Agro-Processing

## ANNEX 1: List of beneficiaries participating in the 10th EDF RPSDP assessment

COUNTRY	BENEFICIARY	SECTOR
Trinidad & Tobago	Full Circle Animation Studio	Creative Industries - Animation
Trinidad & Tobago	Heather Jones International	Creative Industries - Fashion
Trinidad & Tobago	Ibis Ceramic Jewellery	Creative Industries - Jewellery
Trinidad & Tobago	K.C. Confectionery Ltd.	Manufacturing
Trinidad & Tobago	Maturity Music Limited	Creative Industries - Music
Trinidad & Tobago	Meiling Inc.	Creative Industries - Fashion
Trinidad & Tobago	Studio Jay Recording	Creative Industries - Music
Trinidad & Tobago	Sacha Cosmetics	Light Manufacturing

## ANNEX 2: List of countries where beneficiary's products or services are exported

### CARIFOURM

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago

### OCTs

- Anguilla
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman
- Turks and Caicos

### FCORs

- Saint Martin
- Guadeloupe

### Caribbean (Other)

- Aruba
- Bermuda
- Cuba
- Curacao
- Palm Island (Grenadines)
- Puerto Rico
- US Virgin Islands

### North America

- Canada
- Mexico
- United States of America

### South America

- Brazil
- Panama

### Europe

- Belgium
- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Russia
- Spain
- Slovakia
- United Kingdom

### Asia/Pacific

- Australia
- China
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Maldives
- Reunion (Indian Ocean)
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Vietnam

## ANNEX 3: List of programme activities participated in by beneficiaries

### Access to Finance

- Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS)
- In-Firm Design and Branding Grant
- Special CfPs - Food Safety Grant

### Export Promotion

- Caribbean Essence
- Caribbean Kitchen
- Caribbean Fashion Week
- Design Caribbean
- Dominicana Moda
- Expo Cibao
- Havana International Fair
- London Fashion Week
- Trade and Investment Convention
- World Music Expo

### Export Development

- Americas Competiveness Forum
- Anime Caribe Boot Camp
- Break Point
- CARICOM-DR Business Forum
- CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum
- CARIFORUM-FCOR/OCT Business Forum
- CeBIT Study Tour
- Expo Jamaica
- European Study Tour
- Management Consulting Symposium
- OECS-FCOR Trade Mission
- OECS-OCT Trade Mission

### Training and Certification

- Brand Development and Packaging Workshop
- DAGS Proposal Writing Workshop
- Export Marketing Training
- Market Intelligence Training
- Productivity Network Training
- Services Go Global Training

## Notes

## Notes



C A R I B B E A N  
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