



Context

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest exporter of cocoa, as well as the seventh largest exporter of coffee beans. While the production of both cocoa and coffee beans sought to recover from recent civil unrest, the overall situation further deteriorated because of a fungus, which contains Ochratoxine A (OTA) – a toxin that leads to liver and kidney damage while weakening the immune system. To preserve access to foreign markets, and especially those of the European Union, the Ministry of Agriculture of Côte d'Ivoire requested UNIDO's assistance.

Strategy

With funds from the European Union, UNIDO assisted the Ministry of Agriculture of Côte d'Ivoire in adapting an internationally acceptable analysis of coffee and cacao beans. The project had three focus areas: monitoring the status of the toxin and the impact of its removal; identifying the critical points where the bean picks up the fungus; and controlling the relevance of the sampling methods used to establish the level of toxin.

As an immediate step, UNIDO upgraded the national testing facilities by training staff and procuring OTA-detecting instruments. Focus was on awareness-building and on the introduction of good practices, with a special emphasis on production and post-harvest stages. Training material, including leaflets, posters, radio spots and short films were prepared to show producers how to avoid and/or reduce contamination during plantation as well as throughout the first processing steps.

Results

- Sampling procedures established in line with EU standards
- 125 persons from the Ministry of Agriculture and cooperatives trained, including 26 trainers
- 2,195 villages and 400 cooperatives benefitted from in-depth training and awareness-building
- 100,000 actors in the supply chain informed about the dangers of OTA
- National information tour on OTA organized
- Visits to lobby EU committees undertaken

Impact/Outlook

UNIDO helped ensure high-quality, uncontaminated cocoa and coffee; this in turn leads to an improved protection of the consumer as well as a renewed confidence of importers. The situation still requires monitoring, and eventually additional interventions if the contamination cannot be controlled.

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At a glance:

Goal: Sustainable improvement of industrial competitiveness

MDG: 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Thematic area:

Trade Capacity-Building

Donor: European Union

Partner: Ministry of Agriculture of Côte d'Ivoire

Budget: EUR 1,750,000

Status: completed

Duration: April 2007 – March 2010