

COLEAD

SPS ACTIVITIES



The mission of COLEAD (Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development) is to facilitate and implement all actions allowing, directly and/or indirectly, to increase the contribution of the agricultural sector, and horticulture in particular, to the achievement of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In practice, COLEAD designs, manages and implements development programmes, by providing online and on-the-ground technical assistance, vocational training and support services that cover regulatory monitoring, market intelligence, networks and alliances, research and innovation brokerage and access to finance.

In a world where disruptions, increased polarisation, change and volatility define the new normal, COLEAD with its partners continues to adapt and grow, focusing on effective programme implementation to support sustainable agrifood systems in EU partner countries and financial resource mobilisation. COLEAD's current strength lies in its human resources, which can be summarised as a team of 80 staff, an association of 500 members and a network of more than 1,000 experts. The team remains mobilised across COLEAD's three main centres of operations (Europe, East Africa – Kenya and West Africa – Togo). The ongoing consolidation of technical partnerships, at global and local levels, means that more technical resources are available to meet the holistic aims of COLEAD's work.

COLEAD is a network and a toolbox for those who are committed to more sustainable agriculture, particularly in developing countries. These programmes and their activities continue to be mainly funded by donors including among other the European Union, the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the French Development Agency (AFD), ENABEL and the World Trade Organisation (through the Standards and Trade Development Facility-STDF). Most COLEAD programmes include a focus on support for SPS capacity building.

COLEAD has launched the following local and global programmes in 2024. This illustrates the dynamism of the organisation and the development of its current and future activities, particularly in the SPS field as in Dominican Republic, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire or Uganda.

- [Food Safety Assistance Programme for the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire \(PASA-Côte d'Ivoire\)](#)
- [Improving sanitary and phytosanitary standards in horticulture in Uganda \(SPS Uganda\)](#)
- [AGRIFI Facility – Technical Assistance \(TA\) services \(service contract with European Development Finance Institutions Management Company \(EDFI MC\)\)](#)
- [IPPC RSAT – Capacity building in plant health using COLEAD's R-SAT tool \(grant contract with the International Plant Protection Convention \(IPPC\) from the FAO\)](#)
- [Project on health and agricultural innovation – Component 1: Animal health, plant health and agrifood safety services in the Dominican Republic](#)

- [Shared Interest Foundation – Côte d’Ivoire, Uganda, Rwanda](#)
- [Standards and Trade Development Facility \(STDF\) – Senegal](#)
- [FAO E-Learning](#)

CORE ACTIVITIES

Over the past two decades, COLEAD has significantly broadened its scope and is now active not only in ACP countries but also across a wide range of low and middle-income nations worldwide. We have developed and trained a network of over 1000 local experts, mainly from ACP, specializing primarily in SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures).

COLEAD is a trusted partner, regularly engaged by stakeholders from ACP, low and middle-income countries, as well as the EU, to tackle critical food safety and plant health issues. This is particularly important where SPS non-compliances threaten to disrupt trade; COLEAD can play an important role in addressing challenges, mitigating risks, and promoting smoother trade relations across a broader spectrum of countries. Our ISO 21001-certified vocational training system ensures that we provide services and support of a high standard.

In 2024, our primary focus at COLEAD has been on intensifying our outreach and enhancing support through our array of innovative tools and programmes. Since the operational launch in July 2022, 1 000+ applications for support were received through the FFM Plus programme. Close to 500 development projects have been designed, and the consolidation of methodologies and tools to be deployed through FFM Plus has been performed. Each request undergoes an initial evaluation before proceeding through our technical committee's approval process, ensuring high standards of assistance and relevancy.

Another highlight of the year concerns the AGRINFO programme which was launched in 2022. The targets for 2023 and 2024 were fully achieved. AGRINFO has produced consistent and quality content during this period, and more than 500 records were prepared and uploaded into the database on all relevant EU

policy and regulatory changes published during 2023 and 2024. These records describe the changes and provide a summary of potential implications and recommended actions for partner beneficiaries.

To be noted also in 2024, the COLEAD 2024 Consultative Committee, held on the 4th of December in Brussels and online, in a shorter format than in 2023 but extended to include more partners, marked an important strategic step by launching a participatory process to develop the COLEAD 2030 strategy. IPPC secretariat will be one of the COLEAD partners to whom a detailed questionnaire will be sent in the first quarter of 2025 to gather feedback contributing to this participative process of developing the COLEAD 2030 strategy.

In 2024, the COLEAD team focused on driving the two major programmes FFM+ and AGRINFO, while also ensuring the continuation of (i) ongoing national programmes including, NExT Kenya and DeSIRA-LIFT which is a service facility supporting DeSIRA, an initiative funded by the European Commission that aims to contribute to climate-relevant, productive, and sustainable transformation of agri-food systems in the global South.

At the core of all COLEAD programmes lies sustainable intensification – increasing production while minimising negative impacts on climate, ecosystems and the productive environment. Activities also address the social and economic dimensions of sustainability, including livelihoods, economic viability, social justice and inclusiveness, for women and youth in particular

SUPPORTING SPS COMPLIANCE

COLEAD monitors the evolution of SPS regulations and their implementation guidelines in order to identify decisions and trends that could have an impact on horticultural value chains in ACP countries and other partner countries. In particular, the changes brought about by the EU Plant Health Law (EU 2016/2031), which came into force in December 2019, and the establishment

of uniform conditions for its deployment under Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 of 28 November 2019.

Some new EU rules have required urgent action by competent authorities in order to maintain trade in the commodities concerned. It has also been important to address underlying structural reform to meet additional demands on authorities in terms of skills, policy and regulatory frameworks, as well as operational resources. COLEAD has provided information and raised awareness among public sector authorities, and has signed Memoranda of Understanding, with detailed action plans and budgets, tailored to the particular needs in each country. Specific activities include:

- Rapid assessment of the national system to comply with the EU requirements (using the COLEAD RSAT tool).
- Support to reinforce national stakeholder platforms for the development and implementation of national action plans, and submission of dossiers to the EU, in the context of EU high-risk commodities, priority pests, and emergency measures
- Capacity building to support the implementation of national action plans outlined in the dossiers, including training and coaching of support services, technical agents, and inspection services
- Capacity building of other target groups including extension services and laboratories

Based on regular contact with public and private sectors, COLEAD designs the tools, documents, technologies and training they need to enhance their capacity to manage and enforce SPS standards. Communication with NPPOs is strengthened by the organization of regular E-meetings on themes related to plant health. Examples of tools developed are interactive dashboards compiling all SPS notifications from countries, Sector Good Practice Guides, an SPS rapid assessment tool, and new educational content on plant health.

In 2024, COLEAD has taken an active role in strengthening phytosanitary systems across West Africa and in Dominican Republic Initiatives include:

- Strengthening Phytosanitary Capacity in Senegal: Based on the results from the PCE exercise conducted in Senegal and identified areas for improvement, an application for a Project Grant has been submitted to STDF with the objective of building the capacities of the national SPS system. The project was approved by the STDF committee in November 2023 and started in May 2024.
- COLEAD is actively supporting the Ministry of Agriculture in the Dominican Republic towards strengthening institutional capacities and integrating One Health principles through key initiatives, including Institutional Strengthening, Integrated Health Information Systems, Surveillance Programmes, and the Development of Good Practice Manuals.

For more details, see the programmes description below.

CURRENT COLEAD PROGRAMMES AND INTERVENTIONS

[Programmes financed by the EU at the request of the OACPS, with funding from the 11th European Development Fund](#)

Fit For Market Plus (FFM+)

Mitigating the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic by strengthening the sustainability of the ACP horticultural sector. This Programme incorporates the lessons–learned from COLEAD’s COVID–19 action plan (implemented from March 2020) and leverages the outputs and support provided through the FFM and FFM SPS programmes. In summary, the intervention provides the necessary support to the horticultural sector in member countries of the OACPS to mitigate the negative economic implications of the COVID–19 pandemic while at the same time to seize new market opportunities by embracing green, low–carbon and climate-resilient strategies through the development and adoption of relevant practices, skills, and technologies. More

than 1000 applications for support have been received since the operational launch in July 2022. More than 500 development projects have been designed, and the consolidation of methodologies and tools to be deployed through FFM Plus has been performed. The rate of implementation of activities is gradually increasing.

This FFM+ programme supports both the private sector and ACP competent authorities, in particular National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) and inspection services, to enhance their capacity to manage and enforce SPS standards. FFM+ targets, in particular, NPPOs, SPS official controls, and plant protection product regulatory authorities. Activities include support to NPPOs to adapt to the new EU plant health rules, covering training in Pest Risk Analysis, dossier preparation, and new requirements concerning export documentation and phytosanitary certificates.

Programmes and interventions financed by the EU

AGRINFO

Towards a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system: addressing compliance with EU regulatory and non-regulatory measures. The first year of AGRINFO was an inception phase to put in place the necessary expertise, information systems, procedures, partnerships, and methodologies. Delivery of concrete outputs against the programme indicators only began at scale in 2023.

The [AGRINFO information system](#) covers EU policies and regulatory and non-regulatory measures that have a potential impact on the competitiveness, market access and trade dynamics of agri-food and fisheries value chains linked to the EU market. Meeting EU regulations and standards is a major factor in achieving market access and encouraging domestic and foreign investment in trade. However, evolving regulatory and market requirements can pose a challenge for developing and emerging economies exporting goods to the EU. This programme provides access to clear and timely information with the

overall aim of helping to minimise any negative impacts while optimising opportunities that result from new measures and regulations that affect production, business, and trade. AGRINFO also aims to encourage greater participation by partner countries and stakeholders in consultation opportunities.

500+ records were published, and 40 bi-monthly newsletters were issued since the start of the program. First impact studies and market analysis have been launched. Proactive dissemination of targeted relevant information has been initiated. A specific effort to deploy and mobilise new contacts in the 143 countries covered by the programme is currently underway.

DeSIRA–LIFT (in consortium)

Leveraging the DeSIRA initiative for agri-food systems transformation. DeSIRA–LIFT is a service facility supporting DeSIRA, an initiative funded by the European Commission that aims to contribute to climate-relevant, productive, and sustainable transformation of agri-food systems in the global South. DeSIRA supports research and innovation projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and strengthens research capacities and governance involving key actors at the national, regional, and global levels. COLEAD has been identified as leader of the Work Package 2 – Actions in support of CAADP ex-pillar 4 organisations (FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, CORAF, CCARDESA, GFAR). This work package identifies and implements support for the ex-pillar 4 organisations, in close consultation with these organisations.

CEA-FIRST

CEA-FIRST is a pioneering platform uniting Africa and Europe to tackle food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. Over three years, this EU-funded initiative, launched in Accra in February 2024, brings together 22 partners from public and private sectors, research institutions, and civil society to strengthen collaboration and innovation. As part of the International Research Consortium (IRC), CEA-FIRST addresses challenges like climate change and demographic shifts, aiming to position agriculture as a driver of economic development.

Funded by the European Union as part of the Green Deal's "From Farm to Fork" strategy, CEA-FIRST focuses on several key objectives including creating a shared knowledge platform, prioritizing research and innovation, updating the AU-EU R&I roadmap, establishing thematic working groups, and enhancing policy dialogue between Africa and Europe. COLEAD leads efforts to foster multi-stakeholder engagement, bridge research and practical applications, and support the EU's "Global Gateway" vision, promoting sustainable, reliable connections for global challenges like climate change and food supply chain resilience.

FAO e-learning training toolkit on plant health legislation

In alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, the project aims to develop a comprehensive training toolkit on plant health legislation. This toolkit is designed to enhance knowledge and awareness of plant health legislation's key components, and its vital role in ensuring sustainable agri-food systems, and to bolster outreach efforts in this area.

The toolkit aims to serve not only as a resource for legislative reform but also to build institutional capacity, and raise awareness and political interest in plant health.

NExT Kenya

Financed by EU Delegation in Kenya (2021–24): NExT Kenya (New Export Trade) programme for enhancing horticultural exports. It aims to increase the sector's contribution to the household incomes. In 2024, the implementation of activities is fully ongoing, with significant volumes of activities. The programme was evaluated technically very positively (ROM evaluation).

VC4D

Value chain analysis for development, VCA4D, ad-hoc services on value chains analyses in the fruit and vegetable value chain falling into the remit of its action. COLEAD provides information on (i) market trends in national, regional, and international markets, combining analysis of publicly available data and own market insights, (ii) the main data sources and (iii) any useful

complementary elements or sources. 4 market profiles were carried out in 2023 and 2 market profiles are ongoing since the end of 2024.

Programmes financed by other donors

STDF Senegal

The aim of the project - Strengthening phytosanitary capacity to contribute to food security and the development of horticultural exports from Senegal - is to strengthen national phytosanitary capacity in order to contribute to food security and the development of fruit and vegetable exports in Senegal. Based on the results of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) conducted in 2023 and the COLEAD R-SAT (Rapid SPS Assessment Tool) methodology, the project proposes a series of updates and improvements to current plant health management frameworks to bring Senegal up to international phytosanitary standards. It has four main areas of activity: revising the legal framework, strengthening operational capacity, improving the skills of the staff involved, and stimulating communication and cooperation between the various stakeholders.

The project is funded by the WTO's Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) at the request of the Senegalese Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Food Sovereignty's (MAERSA) Directorate of Plant Protection.

SIA (Sanidad e Innovación Agropecuaria) - Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic has launched the SIA Project (Sanidad e Innovación Agropecuaria) to support the Ministry of Agriculture in enhancing food safety, aligning with international standards, and boosting competitiveness, while integrating the "One Health" approach. Funded by the Inter-American Development Bank over 29 months, the project focuses on innovation, sustainability, and addressing key challenges in the agricultural sector. COLEAD works specifically on some part of Component 1 - Animal health, plant health

and agri-food safety services in the DR. It is structured around four main modules, each targeting specific aspects of the Dominican agriculture and livestock sector:

- Module 1: health reform, including updating regulations and developing a national SPS policy.
- Module 2: improving SPS systems for better decision-making based on scientific and factual data.
- Module 3: strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary surveillance programmes
- Module 4: improve health management within the food safety department, focusing on good agricultural practices.

For more information about our programs, please visit our website (www.colead.link).

Programmes and projects closed in 2024

Fit For Market SPS - Strengthening the sanitary and phytosanitary systems of the horticultural sector in ACP countries. Out of almost 500 compliant applications for support received since the start of the programme, 275 individual technical assistance missions took place for target operators, support structures and competent authorities. 85 individual tailor-made training sessions were organised, coupled with 122 collective training sessions, totaling 1,742 participants. Finally, 58 sustainability self-assessments were conducted. The final technical evaluation (alongside FFM) was finalised in March 2024, with positive outcome. The FFM SPS programme's substantial contribution to market access, management skills, sectoral link strengthening, support for SPS compliance, fostering technical innovation, and promoting sustainable practices has led to tangible economic benefits (improvements in livelihoods, including education, food security, and household investments) and improved adoption of sustainable production practices among MSMEs.

The programme was officially financially closed in June 2024 with a financial execution rate of 99.2%.

STDF Guinea [National] Strengthening the phytosanitary control and certification system in Guinea (focus on potato and mango value chains). The project was technically closed in April 2024, and administratively closed in September 2024.

UNIDO Guinea Bissau: Improving the competitiveness of the Guinea Bissau mango sector: production, local processing, and export support. New activities defined for 2024 after the programme was temporarily put on standby, pending confirmation from donors of no-cost extension. This intervention is currently undergoing the administrative and financial closing.

Joint activities with the IPPC Secretariat

On 19th November 2021, an MoU was signed between COLEAD and the IPPC. IPPC Secretariat and COLEAD (formerly COLEACP) renewed and extended their partnership in December 2024 to strengthen collaborative actions in plant health in order to minimize the impacts of plant pests and to facilitate safe trade, development, and economic growth.

In 2024, COLEAD representatives participated in 2 working groups coordinated by the IPPC Secretariat. These include the IPPC Working Group related to the Capacity Development Committee (IC) Team on *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. cubense Tropical Race 4 (TR4) and also to the Plant Health Officer Curricula Working Group. These groups addressed the development of training and guidance documents.

Between 2021 and 2024, COLEAD made significant strides in developing and translating e-learning courses on Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) and Export Certification. These courses, created under the "FAO Support to COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme," aim to support the implementation of the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM).

In August 2024, through the FFM Plus programme funded by the EU under the 11th EDF, and in collaboration with the IPPC Secretariat, COLEAD launched a training initiative to strengthen national phytosanitary capacity strategies based on Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations (PCE). The COLEAD R-SAT (Rapid SPS Assessment Tool), which complements the PCE, played a key role in helping participating countries develop project proposals to enhance stakeholder collaboration and coordinate phytosanitary actions.

From October 7–11, 2024, COLEAD and IPPC secretariat organized a face-to-face workshop in Rome “Project Definition Workshop”, bringing together 46 participants (34 in person, 12 online), including PCE Facilitators, National PCE Coordinators, and Heads of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). The workshop focused on peer-to-peer learning, sharing best practices, and drafting phytosanitary project proposals for Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda. It built on PCE findings and utilized the R-SAT methodology to address national and regional priorities.

Participants praised the workshop for its practical relevance and the skills it provided in drafting fundable project proposals. The inclusion of gender mainstreaming, led by COLEAD and the FAO gender team, underscored the importance of inclusive approaches in phytosanitary development.

COLEAD is actively supporting the development and finalization of project proposals, ensuring alignment with their respective national objectives and donor expectations. These projects will represent a significant step toward enhancing phytosanitary governance, food security, and international trade facilitation in the participating countries.

COLEAD also collaborated with the IPPC secretariat to develop an E-learning course on Phytosanitary Inspection, together with the associated working group constituted by the IPPC secretariat. The Phytosanitary Inspection training was initially developed in English and is now undergoing translation to Spanish with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The PRA Training previously translated into French is also being translated for the Spanish eLearning course. The main goal is to have all

the IPPC-COLEAD training available in English, French and Spanish language so that it is accessible to a wide audience. Those e-learning courses are already available in English on the [IPPC website](#) and on the [COLEAD eLearning platform](#).

COLEAD has translated 12 IPPC guides into French to make them more globally accessible, particularly for the francophone countries in West Africa. French versions of the following guides have been produced:

- IPPC Guide to resource mobilization - Guide de la CIPV sur la mobilisation des ressources
- Guide for developing contingency plans for outbreaks of quarantine pests - Guide pour la planification des interventions d'urgence en cas d'apparition d'organismes nuisibles de quarantaine
- Guide to Regulation of Wood Packaging Material - Guide sur la réglementation des matériaux d'emballage en bois
- Pest Status Guide – Guide sur la situation des organismes nuisibles
- Establishing a National Plant Protection Organization – Création d'une Organisation Nationale pour la Protection des Végétaux
- Operation of a National Plant Protection Organization – Fonctionnement d'une Organisation Nationale pour la Protection des Végétaux
- Import verification – Vérification des importations
- Export certification – Certification à l'exportation
- Pest risk communication – Communication sur le risque phytosanitaire
- Managing relationships with stakeholders – Gestion des relations avec les parties prenantes
- Delivering phytosanitary diagnostic services – Prestation de services de diagnostic phytosanitaire
- Surveillance guide – Guide sur la surveillance

Through its programmes, COLEAD supported in-person participation at the CPM 18 of NPPOs from certain Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries. This included Surinam, Burkina Faso and RDC. Additionally, two side events were

organized—one in French and one in English—providing a platform for exchanges with competent authorities.

Last but not least, COLEAD has promoted IPPC–COLEAD collaboration news via its newsletters and social media and beyond FAO initiatives like the tool kit highlighting the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and the critical role of strengthened national and international integrated One Health systems in achieving global food security and environmental protection, with a particular emphasis on the prevention, early warning, and management of plant pests and diseases.



GROWING PEOPLE

COLEAD

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