



IICA-COLEAD

Caribbean Agrifood Business Series

Session n°16: Opportunities in cross-border value chains for Caribbean entrepreneurs

Thursday 27 February 2025 – 14:00-16:00 UTC

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

Isolina Boto – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD



Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, a non-profit association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the European Union (EU), Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEAD, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of the agrifood sector. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of small and medium

enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and developed agrotourism aimed at linking agriculture and tourism sectors.

Allister Reynold Glean – Technical Specialist, International Trade and Regional Integration Programme / Representative in Barbados, IICA



Allister Glean is the Representative (Acting) of the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Barbados. He spent the last 5 years as the International Specialist in Agribusiness and Value Chains, stationed with the St. Lucia Delegation. Allister has worked extensively in the agricultural sector for over 20 years with experience working in agricultural research and development, agribusiness development, food and beverage processing as well as development financing for agribusiness.

Allister has lectured on a part-time basis at the tertiary level for over 16 years in the areas of marketing, strategic planning and business ethics. While trained in management and marketing, he also possesses post graduate qualifications in international relations and agribusiness development. He is also a qualified

attorney at law. Allister tends to have a particular interest in governance, market development and trade facilitation.

Allister has a passion for working with micro, small and medium sized business with emphasis on women, youth and producer groups. In fact, he is himself also a small farmer producing food crops on a 2 1/2 acre plot.



Funded by
the European Union

Dr. Andre Gordon – Managing Director, Technological Solutions Limited



Dr. André Gordon, Managing Director of Technological Solutions Limited (TSL) and CEO/Principal Consultant of TSL Technical Services Limited (TTSL), is a renowned expert in Food Safety and Quality Systems training. With over 37 years of experience, he has provided solution-oriented technical assistance to businesses of all sizes across the Caribbean, North and South America, Europe, and Africa. A pioneer in the region, he established the first private sector-owned ISO 17025-certified laboratory in the Caribbean and has supported over 1,000 businesses in export and manufacturing. Dr. Gordon has played a key role in reopening export markets for Jamaican products, authored four books, and received numerous accolades, including recognition from the USDA for his contributions to the food industry.

Maria Jackson – Founder and Manager, Cocoa Saint Lucie, St Lucia



Maria Jackson is founder and manager of Cocoa Sainte Lucie, an artisan bean-to-bar chocolate company in Saint Lucia. As the island's first female chocolatier, she crafts gourmet dark chocolates using locally sourced, organically grown cocoa beans. Her passion for chocolate-making began during her tenure as a pastry chef at a top resort, where she immersed herself in the art of chocolate production. Committed to community development, Maria collaborates closely with local farmers, ensuring they receive fair compensation and fostering sustainable agricultural practices. Under her leadership, Cocoa Sainte Lucie has expanded its product line to include various dark chocolate percentages, truffles, and chocolate-covered nuts, gaining both

local and international recognition. Maria Jackson's dedication to quality and community has positioned her as a prominent figure in Saint Lucia's burgeoning chocolate industry.

Benjamin Morrison – Programme Officer, International Trade Center



Ben is a Programme Officer in Inclusive Agribusiness Systems at the International Trade Centre (ITC) (UN/WTO) in Geneva. He specialises in agricultural value chain development with a focus on building partnerships that generate impact for smallholder farmers and SMEs, through the Alliances for Action approach. Ben has worked extensively on the formation and implementation of alliances in various sectors across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, with a focus on leveraging private sector investment, value addition at origin and responsible business conduct in value chains. He holds a MA in International Development and a BA in Development Studies and Politics from the Global Development Institute (GDI) at the University of Manchester, UK.

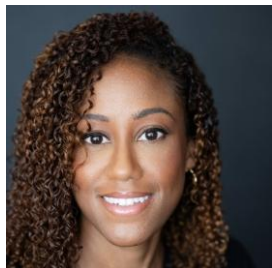
Ravi Sankar – Managing Director, Karibbean Flavours, Trinidad and Tobago



Ravi Sankar is a seasoned entrepreneur and the Managing Director of RHS Marketing Limited, the company behind the Karibbean Flavours brand. With a deep passion for food innovation, he founded RHS Marketing in 1995 and has since expanded its product range to over 100 locally manufactured spices, sauces, condiments, and beverages. Under his leadership, the company has grown from a small local business to an international exporter, reaching 26 markets across the Caribbean, North America, Canada, and the UK. His strategic vision and commitment to quality earned RHS Marketing the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber's Breakthrough Exporter of the Year award in 2021. Beyond business, Sankar is a mentor and advocate for local manufacturing,

continuously working to elevate Caribbean products on the global stage. With plans to establish a new manufacturing facility, he remains dedicated to driving innovation and expanding the reach of Caribbean flavors worldwide.

Nayaatha Taitt – Program Coordinator, Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility



Nayaatha Taitt is a Private Sector Development Consultant with the Inter-American Development Bank, currently coordinating Compete Caribbean + Pillar I ‘Promoting Competitiveness, Climate Action and Inclusiveness of the Caribbean Private Sector’. She has over 10 years of experience working in topics relating to private sector development, innovation & entrepreneurship, and sustainable development, both within and outside the region, and working with key organizations such as IDB Lab, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, United Nations Development Program, and Association of Caribbean States.

Ms. Taitt is also currently pursuing a PhD in Innovation Economics at the United Nations University - Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT), exploring firm-level innovation in the Caribbean, green innovation, and public policies for innovation. She holds an MA in International Affairs from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, Switzerland, and undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

Gyanti Tjon a Loi – Process Engineer, Varross NV, Suriname



Gyanti Tjon A Loi is a Process Engineer at Varross NV, with 3 years of experience in the meat industry. Holding a background in Animal Production & Health Technology, Gyanti specializes in optimizing production processes and ensuring high-quality standards in meat processing. At Varross, Gyanti plays a key role in overseeing operations at the company’s slaughterhouse and meat processing plant, where fresh cuts and value-added products are produced. Gyanti is passionate about innovation, efficiency, and sustainable practices in the agrifood sector. With a strong focus on quality and continuous improvement, Gyanti contributes to Varross’s mission of delivering premium meat products to both local and international markets. Gyanti is committed to strengthening cross-border value chains, driving growth for Varross and the Caribbean agrifood sector.



This event was organised by the Fit For Market Plus programme, implemented by COLEAD within the framework of Development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), and the European Union (EU).

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the EU and the OACPS. Its contents are the sole responsibility of COLEAD and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU or the OACPS.