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Session n°22:

Exploring international and intra-regional market opportunities for Caribbean agrifood MSMEs



Caribbean Agrifood Business Series ...



Funded by
the European Union

Exploring International & Intra-Regional Market Opportunities for Caribbean Agrifood MSMEs

BUILDING EXPORT-READY AGRIFOOD BUSINESSES

The Developmental Role of Export Barbados (BIDC) and The International Food Science Center In Facilitating Access to Regional and International Markets for Agrifood MSMEs

PRESENTATION + INTERACTIVE PANEL DISCUSSION



Presenter

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Exports & Global Logistics Unit, Export Barbados (BIDC)**

About Export Barbados (BIDC)

Established in 1992 under **Chapter 340 of the Barbados Act** as the **Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC)** for the purpose of developing Barbados' industrial, export and related activities.

Since 2021, the Corporation trades as **Export Barbados (BIDC)**.

Export Barbados (BIDC) is the **government's designated authority for certifying exports under relevant preferential trade arrangements for which Barbados is signatory to** (except the EU/CARIFORUM EPA, handled by the Barbados Customs Department).

Export-oriented industries *are central to Barbados' economic development - we must therefore look towards exports.*

~300,000

people is our entire domestic market - and so we must look beyond our shores towards exports.

Why It Matters

- ✓ **Create economic opportunities**
- ✓ **Grow Barbadian businesses**
- ✓ **Earn foreign exchange**

Why Our Role Matters: US\$6B Import Bill and Markets That Desire Caribbean Flavour

~US\$6B

Annual Caribbean Food
Import Bill

US\$418M+

Import-Substitution
Potential Identified by
the CPSO

70–80%

of Caribbean
Businesses are MSMEs



Export Barbados (BIDC)

Barbados' export development agency provides export readiness support, certification services, market intelligence, and export promotion.



International Food Science Center

Our shared-use food manufacturing and science facility at Newton Industrial Estate, launched in November 2022 to help small producers meet export standards.

Regional: CARICOM

Import substitution under the '25 by 2030' goal

- Roots and tubers, cassava, coconut products, niche vegetables
- Shared tastes, shorter transport, one regional market
- Best training ground for supply consistency and buyer relationships

International: Diaspora and Beyond

Where authenticity is the selling point

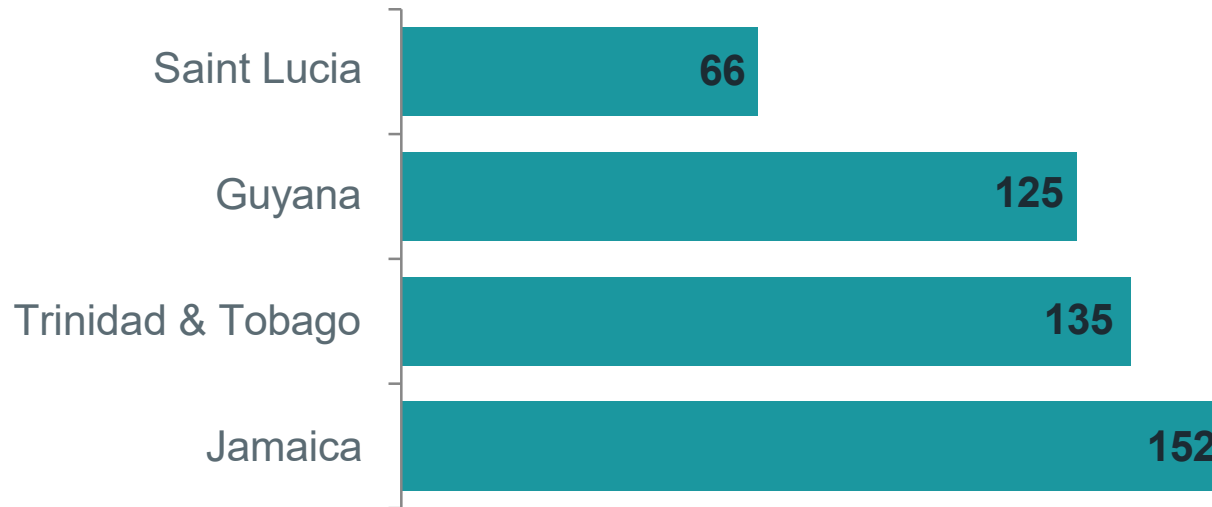
- North America and UK: sauces, seasonings, processed foods
- Europe: rewards niche and premium, but demands safety and traceability
- Barbados brands: pepper sauce, condiments, health and wellness foods

1

OPPORTUNITY EVIDENCE — INTRA-REGIONAL

Defend & Deepen the CARICOM Core

Bdos' Top CARICOM Export Markets (US\$M, 5-Yr Total)



77%

of all certified exports,
2020–2024, Barbados

5 of 5

years CARICOM was the #1
market for Barbados

WHY THIS IS DEFENSIBLE

- **Tariff-free access** under CARICOM rules of origin removes the biggest cost barrier smaller exporters face elsewhere.
- Demand has held for **5 straight years** across biscuits, margarine, juices and rum (food & beverage) for Barbados' products - not a one-off spike.
- Geographic and cultural proximity keeps **freight, compliance and relationship-building costs lower**.
- Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Saint Lucia alone **account for US\$477M of the 5-year total**

ROADMAP

The Export Readiness Journey

Export success begins long before the first shipment.



Important to walk through essentials of each step !!

Is Your Product Export-Ready?

Quality

Consistency

Capacity

Labelling

Packaging

Standards

Pricing

Fulfil Orders

Evaluate Product Suitability:

- ✓ **Product Quality & Consistency**
- ✓ **Production Scalability & Testing**
- ✓ **Adequate Shelf Life**
- ✓ **Export-level Labelling & Shelf-ready Packaging**
- ✓ **Competitive Pricing**
- ✓ **Regulatory Compliance**

Remember: A consistently good product is what export buyers actually purchase.

Standards Don't Block Exports — They Enable Them

Food Safety

- ✓ Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)
- ✓ Quality Management
- ✓ Product Traceability
- ✓ HACCP Systems

Regulatory Requirements

- ✓ Sanitary & Phytosanitary (SPS)
- ✓ Product Registration (where applicable)
- ✓ Export Documentation & Licensing
- ✓ Labelling Compliance

Local Support: The **International Food Science Centre** and **'Approved Manufacturer'** status help strengthen compliance and buyer confidence.

Packaging, Labelling & Branding

International Buyers Expect:

- ✓ Professional Packaging
- ✓ Compliant Labels
- ✓ Ingredients & Nutritional Facts
- ✓ Shelf-life Information
- ✓ Allergen Declarations
- ✓ Country of Origin
- ✓ Barcodes
- ✓ Strong Brand Identity



Packaging opens the first door to orders.

Product quality keeps it open.

Manufacturers must verify:

Ingredients are permitted, colour additives are approved, claims can be substantiated, and packaging meets target-market standards.

Where Are the Opportunities?



**Intra-Regional and
International Markets**



Diaspora Markets



Tourism / Hospitality



**Ethnic & Specialty Food
Segments**



Health & Wellness



**Convenience / Value-
added Foods**



**Premium / Specialty
Caribbean Products**

Inter-Regional Considerations:

- Proximity (accessible entry points for smaller exporters; Shared Customer Preferences; CARICOM Integration)

International Considerations

- Strong Positioning Opportunities

BSO OPPORTUNITY: Help businesses identify specific market demand gaps; and determine how they can meet the market's commercial / regulatory requirements at a competitive cost?

Why Opportunity Doesn't Always Convert

The Caribbean has substantial agrifood production potential and identifiable regional/international market opportunities, yet remains highly dependent on extra-regional food imports. **For MSMEs, the problem is rarely a lack of products or markets - it's a market-conversion gap.**



The Market-Conversion Gap



EXPORT SOLUTIONS FOR MSMEs

1. The International Food Science Centre (IFSC)

Bldg #11, Newton Industrial Estate • Launched November 2022



What It Is

A shared-use food manufacturing and laboratory-based facility **giving MSMEs access to export-grade production capacity and compliance through micro-leasing of the plant and equipment**, so producers can scale production without building their own factory.

Services Available for MSMEs

- ✓ Bottle sanitization
- ✓ Automated bottling and labelling
- ✓ Raw material preparation
- ✓ Onion / garlic puree and other input supplies
- ✓ Dehydration of fruits and vegetables



IFSC Scope

**Cost-efficient
Mechanized Large-
scale Production**

**Enhanced Product
Quality and
Consistency**

**Int'l Food Safety and
Accreditation - FDA
Reg / HACCP & GMP
Certified**

**Food Science
Innovation and Quality
Assurance**

**Access to In-house
Food Science Expertise
incl New Product Dev.**

**Dietary and Labelling
Requirements Input for
Products**

A capacity-building bridge - helping MSMEs meet production and export market requirements.

EXPORT SOLUTIONS FOR MSMEs

2. Five Intervention Areas for Export Barbados (BIDC)



BSOs cannot create demand, make a business export-ready overnight, or guarantee an export sale....

But they can help businesses build the capability to export sustainably by reducing market information gaps; providing technical support to strengthen export readiness; connecting businesses with the right expertise and potential buyers; facilitating logistics and other export solutions; and supporting businesses in navigating the path from market opportunity to commercial export.

Opportunity → Readiness → Connection → Conversion → Retention

1

OPPORTUNITY

Where is there demonstrable demand?

BSO ROLE

- Market Research
- Trade Data
- Buyer Intelligence

2

READINESS

Which businesses serve that opportunity?

BSO ROLE

- Readiness Assessment
- Gap Analysis
- Technical Assistance

3

CONNECTION

How do prepared businesses reach credible buyers?

BSO ROLE

- Buyer Identification
- B2B Meetings
- Trade Missions

4

CONVERSION

How does a lead become an actual transaction?

BSO ROLE

- Negotiation Prep
- Pricing/Logistics Support
- Commercial Follow-up

5

RETENTION / GROWTH

How does one order become repeat business?

BSO ROLE

- Buyer Feedback
- Troubleshooting
- Account Development

This is arguably the gap between traditional export promotion and export development.

Three Snapshots from Micro Agrofood Processors

1



Product Development / Readiness

A business had a viable product but needed testing, costing and food-safety / readiness work before approaching the market.

2



Buyer Connection

Through an in-house market development programme, businesses secured international buyer interest leading to in-market testing but had to work through input sourcing, pricing, packaging, and capacity.

3



Market Engagement

A trade mission / event generated leads — but the real value depended on follow-up and converting contacts into commercial relationships.

Caribbean agrifood MSMEs have opportunities beyond their domestic markets. The challenge is converting those opportunities into sustainable business — by understanding the market, becoming export-ready, connecting with the right buyers, and delivering consistently.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Entrepreneurship Support Ecosystem



Business Development

Strategic Planning • Advisory •
Market Research • Export
Planning



Quality / Standards

GMP • HACCP • ISO • Product
Safety • Quality Management



Product Development

Product Improvement • Label
Compliance • Packaging •
Branding



Financing

Working Capital • Export
Financing • Equipment • Grants



Digital Competitiveness

Website / E-commerce • Digital
Marketing • B2B • CRM



Export Development

Market Intelligence • Trade
Missions • Buyer Matchmaking
• Coaching

Every step of your export journey — from idea to global brand — has support behind it.

Thank You For Your Attention !!



Address: Small Business Centre, Fontabelle, St. Michael

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exportbarbados.org | internationalfoodsciencecenter.com

Thank you

