



## Session 22:

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

Tuesday 22 September 2026

## BIODATA OF SPEAKERS

### Inês Bastos – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD



Inês Bastos is the Head of Networks & Alliances at COLEAD, bringing over two decades of expertise across technical assistance, monitoring, network management, and policy development, with a deep specialisation in agri-food sector development. Since joining COLEAD, Inês has led and coordinated technical activities across Sub-Saharan Africa, overseeing programs and projects spanning agri-food production and processing, business management, access to finance, and network development. In 2024, she took on the role of COLEAD's Gender lead, driving women's empowerment across

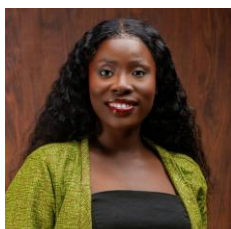
the organisation's programs.

### Allister Reynold Glean – Technical Specialist, Representative in Barbados, IICA



Allister Glean is the Representative 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.

### Ahoefa Soklou – Project Officer, COLEAD



Ahoefa Immaculée Soklou is a Project Officer at COLEAD, where she designs and implements programmes that promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainability in the agrifood sector across the global south countries. She holds a master's in development studies from Senghor University, Egypt, and a bachelor's in economics from the University of Kara, Togo. Ahoefa has extensive experience coordinating high-impact leadership and entrepreneurship initiatives, supporting participants in skills and capacities

development, expanding business opportunities, and fostering inclusive economic growth. Before joining COLEAD, she led a large-scale digital and entrepreneurship capacity-building programme for 1,200 women entrepreneurs, primarily in agrifood, in collaboration with national and international partners. Passionate about inclusive economic opportunities, women's empowerment, and resilient food systems, she is committed to creating impactful programmes that enable local communities to thrive.



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### **Ruel Sandiford Edwards – Managing Partner, Soleil Consulting**



Ruel Sandiford Edwards is a Caribbean development-finance and private-sector specialist with more than 15 years of experience across the public and private sectors. He holds an MA in Development Finance from the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management and an MBA from Oxford Brookes University, with specialisations including sustainable agriculture development, SME and climate/renewable-energy finance, agro-processing and trade policy. His professional work has included market assessments, value-chain studies, policy development, project design, resource mobilisation and investment analysis for Caribbean governments, CARICOM and international development organisations.

### **Julia Deane – Business Development Officer, Export Barbados**



Julia L. Deane is a Business Development Officer with Export Barbados (BIDC), within the Exports and Global Logistics Unit, with over 30 years of combined experience in MSME business support, export development, programme coordination and stakeholder engagement. During her 25-year tenure with Export Barbados, she has worked across several divisions, supporting entrepreneurs through export readiness, business coaching, capacity building, market development and buyer engagement initiatives. She has contributed to programmes supporting MSMEs and green entrepreneurs, including export readiness and e-commerce acceleration initiatives. Ms. Deane holds a BSc (Hons) in Management (Marketing), with further studies in Business Analytics and Grant Proposal Writing, and also brings 10 years of prior entrepreneurial experience.

### **John Robin – Managing Director, Benjo Seamoss, Dominica**



John Robin is a Dominican entrepreneur and the founder/manager of Benjo's Seamoss & Agro Processing Ltd. He became interested in the commercial potential of sea moss while studying fisheries development in Canada more than 25 years ago. After returning to Dominica, he developed Benjo's Seamoss into a sea-moss processing and beverage business, with products exported across the Caribbean. He has also served as a director of the Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce.

### **Madhevi Gopal – Co-Director, Gopex, Suriname**



Madhevi Gopal co-leads Gopex International N.V., a family-owned agricultural company established in 1998 together with her husband, Bhiesnoepersad Gopal, Managing Director of the company. Over the years, Gopex has grown from a small family business into a professional company employing around 50 people. The company grows and exports fresh vegetables and other agricultural products, mainly to the Netherlands, and has extensive experience working with international customers. Madhevi is closely involved in the day-to-day management of the company, with responsibilities spanning finance, administration, logistics, customer relations and export activities. Her role also covers various aspects of the business, from production and quality management to packaging, shipping and customer relations. With a strong focus on quality and food safety, she has contributed to the continuous improvement of Gopex's processes to meet the requirements of international markets and customers.

As a member of the family that built Gopex over many years, Madhevi brings a strong understanding of the realities, challenges and opportunities of running and growing an agricultural export business.

### **Roderick St. Clair – General Manager, Grenada Co-operative Nutmeg Association, Grenada**



Roderick Senator Roderick St.Clair has a background in teaching Agriculture and other sciences at the CXC Level. He worked for over two decades in the Agriculture Business Sector in Grenada mainly in fresh produce marketing as a Senior Manager at the Marketing & National Importing Board – Grenada and most recently he has entered the Spice Sub-sector as the General Manager of the Grenada Co-operative Nutmeg Association.

As a media enthusiast, Roderick started as a weekly columnist with the Grenadian Voice, photo journalist delivering online content. With a diploma in Information in Agriculture, he hosted and produced several agriculture programs which was distributed beyond Grenada. Roderick is a three-time Second Vice president of the Grenada Media Workers Association. He possesses a BSc degree in Total Quality Management, MBA with a focus on International Business, plus diplomas in (i) Enterprise Development through Value Chain and Business Service Markets: a Pro-Poor Approach and (ii) Agriculture and (ii) Market Development & Value Chains.

Roderick travelled throughout the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America and China and Singapore, attending workshops and international conferences on Agriculture and Agri-Business from which strong network with global actors and experts in the agriculture sector developed and maintained.

### **Koen Vanderhaegen – Market Insights Manager, COLEAD**



Koen Vanderhaegen is a Bio-Science Engineer with specialization in Tropical Crop Production, after his studies and research experiences in Ecuador, Ethiopia and Uganda, he joined COLEAD in 2019 and became the Market Insights department manager. Together with his multinational team and strengthened by a large network of external experts he provides quantitative and qualitative information on the tropical fruit and vegetable trade and markets to the COLEAD members and stakeholders. Additional to these market

intelligence services also business support is provided by the Market Insights department under the form of B2B match making, marketing support etc..



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