



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



©FAO Belize

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE RURAL AND PERI-URBAN AREAS OF THE CAYO DISTRICT, AS A RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19

May 2024

SDGs:



Country:

Belize

Project Code:

TCP/BZE/3801

FAO Contribution:

USD 330 000

Duration:

1 January 2021–31 August 2023

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Belize  
FAO-BZ@fao.org

### Implementing Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise.

### Beneficiaries

Rural women and youth in Cayo District.

### Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

#### Belize CPF 2016-2019

Priority 1: Enhancing Trade in Agricultural and fisheries products.

Output 1.3: Enabling business environment supported to improve agricultural entrepreneurship.

Output 1.4: Access to affordable development capital for small producers improved with the support of FAO.

Priority 2: Food and Nutrition Security.

Output 2.2: Food production by family farms strengthened.

Priority 3: Promoting sustainable and resilient food systems.

Output 3.2: Good practices strengthened among farmers and agro-processors along the value chain.

Output 3.3: Capacity of small farmers to recover from disaster strengthened.



### BACKGROUND

The project sought to address three primary challenges faced by the rural agricultural sector in Belize. These were (i) the need for a regional and territorial development mechanism utilizing the food systems approach to include rural small farmers in the national economy, (ii) the need to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise (MAFSE) to provide training and technical assistance to youth and Indigenous women to develop agriculture enterprises and (iii) the need to enable market access for small agribusinesses by leveraging on public market opportunities such as the school feeding programmes through an agribusiness incubation programme.

The challenges were addressed through a particular focus on strengthening the technical capacity of the MAFSE to generate data and turn it into business analytics for the selection of beneficiaries. This output sought to utilize multidimensional geographic information tools to identify feasible areas for investment and develop plans that promote regional and territorial development, with emphasis on the inclusion of women and youth farmers from rural communities.

The second output sought to assist stakeholders in adapting, validating and using an incubation process to strengthen the technical capacity of entrepreneurs to develop and implement sustainable, climate-smart business ventures. The aim was to enhance the capacity of the MAFSE, the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation (BMDC) and the University of Belize (UB) to deliver training and technical assistance through the Technical Agribusiness Incubation methodology.

As a third output, the project provided technical assistance and contributed to the development of a policy and governance framework that integrates the outputs from the incubator programme and other local food production schemes into the national school feeding programme. Under this output, policy recommendations were developed to support the linkage of small producers to institutional markets, such as the school feeding programmes across the country.

Overall, the project aimed to "build back better" by developing a programme combining geographic information tools, capacity-building initiatives and business incubation.

### IMPACT

The expected impact of the project was the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger among rural youth and women in Cayo District through the adoption of innovative agri-entrepreneurship models.

In practice, the project provided the MAFSE with access to the business planning tools and capacity to address social and territorial inequalities in rural Belize. The project has increased the capacity of technical officers to provide training, mentorship and technical assistance through a technical incubator. The incubation approach enables small producers, including youth and women, to develop and implement business plans using innovative and sustainable strategies. In addition, the programme identified and provided policy recommendations for synergies to sustainably link locally produced food and added value products to the national school feeding programmes.



## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

A needs assessment of the Belize Agricultural Information Management System (BAIMS) was carried out, focusing on the institution's capacity to conduct a feasibility assessment and selection of beneficiaries. A technical manual was developed to conduct a geographical information systems (GIS) feasibility analysis, while a total of 19 officials from the MAFSE, BAIMS, extension services, BMDC, UB and the Cooperatives Department received training. The training focused on the use of the Hand-in-Hand (HiH) Geospatial Platform to conduct the assessments.

The entrepreneurial incubator model promoted by the Reference Centre for Support to New Enterprises (CERNE) was adapted to the local context, with the new model successfully piloted in Belize's Cayo District. Two training of trainers (ToT) workshops were conducted to equip officers from the MAFSE and other partner institutions with the capacity to implement and support the technical incubator programme. A network of partner and support organizations facilitated the implementation of the programme.

Additionally, over 100 entrepreneurs received training in business design during the initial prospecting phase of the incubator. A total of 18 out of 27 applicant enterprises were selected and directly benefited from the training and advisory services of the incubator. Equipment and supply grants were provided to eight of the incubated enterprises. The grant beneficiaries were selected based on criteria such as business potential, investment needs, impact and maturity. Enterprises that failed to meet the criteria for the grants were provided with technical assistance and services. The incubation programme has the added value to provide investment capital, as well as technical and vocational support services by other stakeholders.

The National School Feeding Committee was provided with recommendations to support the development of the Belize national school feeding policy, based on lessons learned in linking smallholder farmers to school feeding programmes. Coordinating the limited demand and incorporating production time frame remains a challenge. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the MAFSE, is committed to supporting the linkage of small producers to the school feeding programmes.

The project was coordinated by a National Technical Committee (NTC) including representatives of processors, small farmers, academia and financial institutions. The NTC provided oversight and networking to nurture a favourable rural micro-, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) ecosystem. A national rollout strategy was also developed to guide the scaling up of the programme.

The MSME ecosystem is expected to support the expansion of the programme into other districts or sectors of the country. A number of stakeholders, including UB, the Ministry of Rural Transformation and the Ministry of Blue Economy, have expressed an interest in adopting the incubation programme. The UB has requested assistance in formulating an incubation programme that would fit with the university's own SMART agriculture programme. The institutionalization of the incubator programme requires the continuous support of all partners and stakeholders.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The majority of the project's components were executed successfully. Project implementation was carried out within the allocated budget but over a time frame longer than anticipated.

Component 3, in particular, was aligned with other regional FAO projects focused on school feeding programmes. There was collaboration between programmes participating in the National School Feeding Committee, while input was received for assessment of the linkages of small producers to the institutional markets. Furthermore, collaboration with the UB for the adoption of the methodology and the development of an agribusiness incubator under the Agriculture Programme was established.

Significant delays were experienced in identifying a local GIS consultant. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, an international consultant to support GIS activities in Belize, Jamaica and the Bahamas was selected.

Upgrading of the BAIMS to integrate GIS analytic systems was not feasible due to time and budgetary constraints. The open-source FAO HiH Geospatial Platform was used to carry out the feasibility assessments.

Component 2 of the programme faced significant delays as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, with training courses needing to be adapted to the virtual environment. Limited digital literacy and connectivity in the country contributed to inefficiency during the pilot programme, as a result of which a training toolkit and manuals were developed with the flexibility for virtual or in-person modes of implementation.

Some of the main constraints encountered during project implementation included restrictions related to COVID-19, which limited the face-to-face interactions, a limited pool of available local consultants, the slow procurement mechanism and an inadequate process flow, limited Internet connectivity, limited access to suitable equipment and digital devices and a lack of capacity to operate the digital devices and navigate and utilize digital software.

### FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The national rollout of the agriculture business incubation programme should seek to foster a culture of collaboration and networking among stakeholders.

The FAO manuals and toolkit should be complemented with commodity-relevant local case studies, examples and best practices. In addition, comprehensive orientation and training in the use and implementation of the incubation toolkit should be provided to incubator staff, mentors and participants.

The implementing entities should establish partnerships with industry suppliers, financial institutions and government agencies to support the incubated enterprises with technical and financial resources. The incubator team should identify funding options and mechanisms to support the financial needs of start-ups and entrepreneurs in the incubation programme and develop strategies to connect incubated businesses with markets. The team should regularly assess the performance of participants and adjust the programme based on feedback and outcomes. Capacity-building is required for small farmers, school principals and buyers to manage the supply of produce to school feeding programmes.



## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Capacity development

Officers from both public and private institutions, including academia, gained the capacity to contribute to the development of enterprises in rural areas utilizing the incubator tool kit. The embedding of such knowledge and capacity within the rural development partners will allow for ownership and continuous support of the incubation programme at the time of its national rollout.

### 2. Gender equality

Women and youth were prioritized during the project implementation. During the incubation pilot, a total of 44 percent of incubated enterprises were led by women, with 39 percent led by young people.

### 3. Environmental sustainability

Project activities were focused on a positive environmental impact, including the integration of environmental stewardship as a key element in the business plan model.

### 4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The project contributed to improving income-generating opportunities for the most vulnerable groups in the rural setting. It also supported the strengthening and transformation of the national school feeding programme into an instrument that promotes the right to healthy diets.

### 5. Technological sustainability

The project contributed to the development of knowledge, skills, resources and good practices for different levels of stakeholders. The tools developed are easily adaptable and can be used by a diverse range of target audiences and sectors.

### 6. Economic sustainability

The incubation programme can facilitate access for participants to financial and technical resources. There is an opportunity for the development of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to further the reach of the programme to other rural enterprises.



## DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise.** June 2021. Press Release: Signing of Grant Agreements. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.agriculture.gov.bz/signing-of-grant-agreements-with-beneficiaries-of-the-agri-business-technical-incubator/>
- ❑ **Breaking Belize News.** June 2021. Signing of Grant Agreements. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2022/06/21/grant-agreements-promoting-business-incubators-signed-between-beneficiaries-ministry-of-agriculture-and-food-and-agriculture-organization-fao/>
- ❑ **The San Pedro Sun.** June 2021. Signing of Grant Agreements. San Pedro Town, Belize. <https://www.sanpedrosun.com/government/2022/06/22/agri-business-grant-agreements-signed/>
- ❑ **Love FM.** June 2021. Signing of Grant Agreements. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=W-Pw5HCu3I>
- ❑ **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise.** September 2021. Social Media Press Release: Virtual Launch of Training of Trainers Workshop. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.facebook.com/166449357416142/posts/virtual-launching-of-the-agri-business-incubation-trainer-of-trainers-workshopth/929583521102718/>
- ❑ **Government of Belize Press Office.** October 2021. Press Release: Training of Trainers Workshop, Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/mafse-and-fao-hold-agribusiness-incubation-train-the-trainers-workshop/>
- ❑ **Government of Belize Press Office.** November 2021. Press Release: Call for Expression of Interest. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/call-for-expression-of-interest-for-the-agri-business-incubation-program/>
- ❑ **Breaking Belize News.** November 2021. Ministry of Agriculture offers assistance to young entrepreneurs in Cayo. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2021/11/16/ministry-of-agriculture-offers-assistance-to-young-entrepreneurs-in-cayo/>



- ❑ **Government of Belize Press Office.** November 2021. Press Release: Call for Expression of Interest. Belmopan, Belize. <https://www.facebook.com/GOBPressOffice/posts/press-releasecall-for-expression-of-interest-for-the-agri-business-incubation-pr/187842560204432/>
- ❑ **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise.** November 2021. Call for Expression of Interest. Belmopan, Belize. [https://www.facebook.com/maf.gov.bz/posts/196312272675945/?paipv=0&eav=Afa0o5mVp0gKrl-uLlyCgrr\\_ain3aK6MLEaJYOPRPvhgLmA6vyCAFj2IU-ykIKvDww&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/maf.gov.bz/posts/196312272675945/?paipv=0&eav=Afa0o5mVp0gKrl-uLlyCgrr_ain3aK6MLEaJYOPRPvhgLmA6vyCAFj2IU-ykIKvDww&_rdr)
- ❑ **Kafka, D.** November 2021. Driving Agribusiness in Belize. Caribbean Capital Group. <https://www.caribbeancapitalgroup.com/driving-agribusiness-in-belize/>
- ❑ **FAO.** 2022. Incubator Brochure.
- ❑ **FAO.** 2022. Incubator Banner.
- ❑ **Breaking Belize News.** February 2023. Ministry of Agriculture representatives attend a virtual three-day regional agribusiness trainer of trainers workshop. <https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2023/02/23/ministry-of-agriculture-representatives-attend-a-virtual-three-day-regional-agribusiness-trainer-of-trainers-workshop/>
- ❑ Technical Incubator – Manual Pre-Incubation and Ideation.
- ❑ Technical Incubator – Manual Incubation Process.
- ❑ Technical Incubator – Manual Training of Trainers.
- ❑ Financing Plan.
- ❑ School Feeding Programme Procurement Mechanism.
- ❑ Rollout Strategy.



## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger amongst rural youth and women in the Cayo District through the adoption of innovative agri-entrepreneurship models
Outcome	<p>The Government of Belize implements an integrated mechanism using business incubator services and technological tools and approaches to match business opportunities presented in the agro-food system with special attention for income generating and employment opportunities of the most vulnerable groups, including youth and women living in the rural and peri-urban areas of the Cayo District</p>
	<p><b>Indicator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of business opportunities identified, incubated and funded across the agrifood system benefiting targeted vulnerable groups, using evidenced-based technological approaches, that boost food and nutrition security, per year, after the end of the project.</li> <li>- Number of additional districts, beyond Cayo, in which the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Immigration, the precursor of the MAFSE, and BMDC have applied the technology and entrepreneurial incubator model, two years after the end of the project.</li> <li>- A multidimensional geographic information data platform is in use, two years after the end of the project, with an increasing number of active members and guest users.</li> <li>- A strategy/policy/plan/programme on the integration of the outputs from the incubation programme and locally grown food with the national school feeding programme is approved and implemented.</li> <li>- Amount of financial resources mobilized by governments and resource partners for innovative agribusiness entrepreneurship and South-South Cooperation.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Baseline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0</li> <li>- 0</li> <li>- 0</li> <li>- 0</li> <li>- 0</li> </ul>
	<p><b>End Target</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30</li> <li>- Three businesses funded are still registered and operating two years after the end of the project (outside Cayo District).</li> <li>- 1</li> <li>- One approved document of the plan and progress report on the implementation.</li> <li>- Approved funding proposal for USD 300 000.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A total of 18 of the 27 enterprises who applied to be part of the formal incubation process directly benefited from the incubator services. Eight of these received funding through the grants programme under the present project, with the businesses at different stages of development and operation. All eight enterprises remained active and in production during the period of project implementation. Monitoring and further support is to be provided by the technical team of the partner public service, which has received training to support the beneficiaries. The rollout of the incubation programme is to be undertaken through the UB Agriculture Department, which will facilitate the meeting of the programme's end target.</li> <li>- The incubation pilot was rolled out in one district (Cayo District), with interest expressed by over 100 participants from both Cayo and other districts. Upon the implementation of the incubation programme, the UB will expand the reach of the incubator over the six districts of Belize through the representative student body. At the time of writing the present report, the incubation program had not yet been rolled out and, as such, no additional enterprise beyond Cayo District had been incubated or benefited from the incubation programme. Given that the target is to be met after a period of two years, it is expected that the UB will support three or more businesses in districts other than Cayo.</li> <li>- Although the GIS platform was not incorporated into BAIMS as initially expected, the HiH geographical platform was introduced as an alternative and will remain available for use by stakeholders in the country. New and updated datasets will need to be uploaded into the system. Support in uploading new datasets will be required and is expected to be provided by the FAO HiH geospatial kit team.</li> <li>- A school feeding programme procurement mechanism was drafted to guide the integration and linkage between small producers and the school feeding programmes. The school feeding programme promotes a flexible menu that would allow schools to plan and provide production scheduling advice to farmers. The national school feeding programme being implemented by the Ministry of Education includes, as part of its integration programme, linkage of small farmers as suppliers to the school feeding programmes across the country. Linking farmers with school feeding programmes will require increased coordination between the MAFSE extension service, the Cooperatives Department and the schools. The Cooperatives Department is currently piloting a contract farming mechanism that can be adopted by the school feeding programmes for the supply of produce by farmers.</li> </ul>

<b>Expected Impact</b>	<b>Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger amongst rural youth and women in the Cayo District through the adoption of innovative agri-entrepreneurship models</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	The Government of Belize implements an integrated mechanism using business incubator services and technological tools and approaches to match business opportunities presented in the agro-food system with special attention for income generating and employment opportunities of the most vulnerable groups, including youth and women living in the rural and peri-urban areas of the Cayo District		
	<b>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</b>	- At the end of the project, no financial commitment had been made by any of the government institutions or supporting partners. No compromise was made by the MAFSE or the BMDC to host the incubator programme, as the incubator would require additional human resources to manage its operations and both institutions have limited human resources with which to undertake these responsibilities. The UB is currently being supported by the local FAO team in seeking the necessary funding to enable the integration and rollout of the programme. The integration of the incubator as part of the UB's SMART agriculture programme will require additional financial resources, for which potential donors are yet to be identified.	
<b>Output 1</b>	Strengthening technical capacity of the MFAI to generate information and data and turn them into business analytics for adequate selection of business plans and beneficiaries		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	- The BAIMS has a multidimensional geographic information data platform that visualizes and overlays economic, statistical and geospatial analyses.		
	- A manual for conducting feasibility and economic viability studies and assessments related to food, agriculture and fisheries projects elaborated and validated, with a pilot of five studies and assessments.	- 1	- No
- At least five feasibility and economic viability studies and assessments are conducted, taking into consideration the different segments of the food system and the agriculture and fisheries sector.	- 1	- Partially	
- Number of technical staff trained to use the upgraded system and new manual as part of the ToT	- 5	- Partially	
	- 20	- Yes	
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	A number of obstacles were faced regarding the hiring of a technical consultant to lead this component locally. A consultant was hired to work concurrently with the incubation teams in the Bahamas, Belize and Jamaica. Meanwhile, BAIMS is to undergo an upgrade of its system to generate a user interface for stakeholders. This will allow access to agglomerated data that would be appropriate to use for feasibility analysis. As an alternative, a small number of data files on the HIH Geospatial Platform could be used to facilitate the feasibility analysis.		
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	<b>Assessment of current situation and definition of needs</b>		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	An assessment was made of the BAIMS system, consultations held with relevant staff managing the platform and a roadmap on the improvements were determined.	
<b>Activity 1.2</b>	<b>Implementation of the plan proposed</b>		
	<b>Achieved</b>	No	
	<b>Comments</b>	It was determined that the work required to upgrade the BAIMS infrastructure was best approached from a holistic point of view, rather than through a range of potentially chaotic alterations to the system. In addition, the GIS consultant had limited time and financial resources with which to make the infrastructure changes that would be required by the BAIMS system. As an alternative, the HIH Geospatial Platform was used for the assessment.	
<b>Activity 1.3</b>	<b>Conducting at least 5 feasibility and economic viability studies and assessments, and a manual for conducting feasibility</b>		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Partially	
	<b>Comments</b>	Feasibility assessments were implemented during the ToT workshops, with the assessment of the business plans and models previously presented. The manual developed focused on the use of the HIH platform for mapping and not on the assessment and evaluation of the business concepts.	

Activity 1.4	Elaboration and validation of a manual for conducting feasibility and economic viability studies and assessments related to food, agriculture, and fisheries projects			
	Achieved	Partially		
Comments	Given the challenges faced in terms of the identification of the GIS consultant, the project was forced to proceed without the GIS feasibility assessment system. The business plans were evaluated using a basic multidimensional criterion. The manual was created but not validated, as the pilot was initiated before the GIS tool had been developed.			
Activity 1.5	Training of the BAIMS personnel and technical assistance for the use of the upgraded system and the manual			
	Achieved	Partially		
Comments	A total of 19 officials from a range of institutions, including the MAFSE, BMDC, UB and the Cooperatives Department were trained on the use of the HiH Geospatial Platform and the ESRI GIS platform to conduct beneficiary identification and feasibility assessments. The HiH platform remains the main element for identifying and evaluating the feasibility of enterprises. The training was primarily theoretical.			
Output 2	Technical assistance provided to the MFAI, BMDC and University of Belize [UB] to adapt, validate, and use an appropriate incubation system for strengthening the technical capacity of young and female entrepreneurs to develop and implement business ventures that are sustainable and climate-smart in different areas of the food system to include fishery (including production, processing, distribution and commercialization)			
	Indicators	Target	Achieved	
	- A technology and entrepreneurial incubator model adapted, validated and piloted in Cayo District, in coordination with the MFAI, BMDC and UB.		- 1	- Yes
	- A financing strategy for business plans prepared		- 1	- Yes
- Number of technical staff and managers from the MFAI and BMDC trained to use the technology and entrepreneurial incubator model, including the rural business planning methodology and training materials.		- 20	- Yes	
- Number of methodological tools and training materials elaborated to promote market linkages with domestic markets (with a particular focus on school feeding and other institutional markets), as well as regional and international markets.		- 1	- Partially	
- Number of technical staff from the BMDC trained to use the methodological tools and training materials		- 20	- Yes	
Baseline	0			
Comments	The incubator programme was adapted from the CERNE model, a hybrid model that integrates remote and face-to-face delivery of capacity-building strategies. The model involves the integration of business and agronomic technical assistance. Given the COVID-19 restrictions in force at the time, face-to-face capacity-building was limited.			
Activity 2.1	Selection and hiring of Incubator coordinator			
	Achieved	Yes		
Comments	The incubator coordinator was hired in May 2021 and retained for the duration of the project. For sustainability purposes, the UB will identify a lead lecturer who would familiarize themselves with the incubation program model and tools and oversee its implementation.			
Activity 2.2	Training of Trainer and development methodology/model			
	Achieved	Yes		
Comments	A ToT model and manual was drafted and piloted. The ToT involved training participants on the types of incubation systems and introduced the CERNE model of incubation. The ToT was used to develop the design process and the development of business plans. After the pilot, the development of the fully-fledged incubation model was undertaken. COVID-19 and other initial constraints caused the ToT to be carried out in parallel with the development of the incubation model. It is expected that the trained officers will remain committed to the technical incubation programme and will be available to lend their technical services to the new incubator.			
Activity 2.3	Development of Business Plans			
	Achieved	Yes		
Comments	The incubator training offered capacity-building to over 117 interested individuals from within Cayo District to develop their business plans via virtual and face-to-face training session. A total of 27 enterprises developed and presented their initial business plans following the impact business model.			

Activity 2.4	Validation of Technical Incubator Model and Tools	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	An eight-module incubation model was developed. The modules featured in the model were (i) Sensitizing and Prospecting, (ii) Selection, (iii) Planning System, (iv) Qualification and training, (v) Advisory and consulting, (vi) Monitoring and Evaluation, (vii) Maturity for graduation and (viii) Incubator Management. Each module contained 38 processes. These steps were verified to ensure that the interventions were carried out with an adequate level of success. The tools have been adequate to the local context and are user-friendly. Technical stakeholders are expected to utilize the tools when implementing the incubation process during the national rollout.
Activity 2.5	Business Incubation	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A total of 19 out of a total of 27 applicant enterprises qualified to be incubated, with 18 agreeing to the terms of the incubator and participating in the incubation process. The incubated enterprises represented a diversity of subsectors, including permaculture, livestock, horticulture, agroprocessing and agritourism. Of the incubated enterprises, a total of 44 percent were female-led and 39 percent youth-led. The enterprises also represented a diversity of ownership models, including groups, partnerships and single-owner enterprises. The incubation process was held over a period of six months, and involved virtual cohort training, as well as both virtual and face-to-face coaching sessions.
Activity 2.6	Development of a financing strategy for business plans	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A financing plan was developed, including three main financing strategies for eligible business plans: (i) financing through a grants programme – utilizing funds in amounts of USD 30 000 from the project to businesses, (ii) services through partnerships and stakeholders – supporting enterprises with technical and other services that were available through other stakeholders (public and private), and (iii) third party funding opportunities, involving aligning the business plans to other funding opportunities available through other partners and stakeholders. The financing plan provides well defined strategies, the implementation of which should be timely and negotiated from before the implementation of the incubation mechanism.
Activity 2.7	Training of trainer (technical staff and managers from the MoA (the District Agriculture Department Office Extension Services Unit) trained to use the rural business planning methodology and training materials)	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Ten participants took part in a three-day ToT workshop on the application of the incubator methodology for rural business development. The training was carried out virtually and showcased the lessons learned from the pilot programme and training on the use and implementation of the agribusiness incubation model, manuals and tools that were developed through the pilot programme. Participants included representatives from the MAFSE extension service, the Cooperatives Department, BMDC, La Inmaculada Credit Union and the Development Finance Corporation.
Activity 2.8	Elaboration of methodological tools and training materials to promote market linkages with domestic markets (with a particular focus on school feeding and other institutional markets), and regional and international markets	
	Achieved	No
	Comments	Efforts were made by the Cooperatives Department to promote the use of contract farming systems to promote market linkages. These are being explored for implementation through the school feeding programme of the Ministry of Education. Contributions were made by the incubator consultants to the National School Feeding Committee regarding the procurement strategies. The Committee will promote the link between producers and the demand for the school feeding programmes.
Activity 2.9	Training of trainer (technical staff from the BMDC trained to use the methodological tools and training materials)	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	Training was provided to officials from MAFSE, Cooperatives Department, BMDC and La Inmaculada Credit Union. A total of 10 participants took part in the virtual training that shared the tools and the mechanism for implementation of the incubation programme, including the manuals drafted.

<b>Output 3</b>	Technical assistance is provided for a policy and governance framework that sustainably integrates the outputs from the incubator programme and other local food production into the national school feeding program		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	- A strategy/policy/plan/programme on the integration of the outputs from the incubation programme and locally grown food with the national school feeding programme.		
	- Intersectorial and interinstitutional coordination platform established, integrated by BAIMS, BMDC, Department Office Extension Services Unit, stakeholders from other units of the MAFSE, IFAD, the private sector and other actors.	- 1	- Yes
	- A final report documenting lessons learned, success stories and good practices.	- 1	- Yes
	- National Strategy Plan to consolidate and expand the model across the country.	- 1	- Yes
- A funding proposal with a particular focus on South-South Cooperation, to support scaling up and expansion elsewhere, developed and presented to resource partners (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], Inter-American Development Bank [IDB] and others).	- 1	- Partially	
- A communication plan with lessons learned and successful case studies	- 1	- Yes	
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	The Ministry of Education and the Cooperatives Department require collaboration if small enterprises are to be successfully linked to the school feeding programme. Procurement is managed by each school, while the volumes of produce demanded by each school is limited and not attractive to farmers. The school feeding programmes should seek to ensure that schools carry out joint procurement (clusters) in order to generate the necessary demand to negotiate good prices and production schedules with the producers.		
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Support for inter-sectorial coordination and the development of a strategy		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An intersectoral committee was established with representation from academia, public and private sector stakeholders, including the UB, small farmer representatives, the MAFSE, Cooperatives Department, La Inmaculada Credit Union and Running W Meat Processor. The Committee assisted in guiding the implementation of the programme and the rollout strategy. Quarterly meetings were held to keep the Committee abreast of the development of project activities. A recommendation is to include additional representatives from subsectors that have different technical capacities, as needed by the incubatees.	
<b>Activity 3.2</b>	Support for communication and replication of the experience elsewhere		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A communications plan was developed, with the MAFSE communications team supporting the development and dissemination of information via local media channels, including social media. The rollout strategy for the expansion of the incubation services to other districts of the country was developed. The UB expressed an interest in integrating the incubation programme under its current SMART Agriculture programme, however no hard commitment had been provided at the time of writing this report. The institutionalization of the incubator programme will require additional support from the FAO incubator team to identify resource partners to support the process.	

**Partnerships and Outreach**

For more information, please contact: [Reporting@fao.org](mailto:Reporting@fao.org)

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla

00153 Rome, Italy