

FRANCE

Entry of skilled/younger farmers

Location

Guyana Regional Nature
Park

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

Measure

M4 – Investments in physical
assets (accessibility)
M6 – Farm & business
development

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 126 478
EAFRD 71 908
National/Regional 23 969
Private 30 601

Project duration

2013 – 2017

Project promoter

Exploitation BARON Solenn

Contact

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Website

n/a

A young female farmer used RDP support to develop a farm business that would provide her with sufficient income in order to become a full time farmer.

Summary

A young farmer, mother of two children and trained as an agronomist, wanted - through investing in experimental and innovative agroecological models - to develop a farm business that would provide her with sufficient income to become a full-time farmer.

The project supported the setting up of fruit and vegetable production in open fields and greenhouses of around 11 hectares. Support was also used to acquire equipment for clearing the fields, installing distribution ramps for irrigation and buying rootstock.



Results

Twice a week, one ton of vegetables is delivered to a wholesaler.

The farm's revenue in 2018 amounted to EUR 8 100 and is expected to increase in the years to come.

Since 2016, a part-time employee (20 hours / week) was hired through a subsidized employment contract.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Women can play a key role in developing the farming sector. In French Guyana, 60% of small-scale farming is in the hands of female farmers.
- ❑ The experimental and innovative approach to tropical vegetable and fruit production is a strong asset in this case and several products processed from tropical fruits, such as bissap juice and cupuaçu cream, have the potential to become interesting, niche business developments.

Context

French Guyana is dominated by over 85,000 km² of woodlands with only 4% of land dedicated to agriculture. One of the challenges of setting up an agricultural business is access to land. The State owns 90% of the land, and since the turn of the century, the government has been implementing [a strategy in order to increase agricultural land use](#). This initiative has mainly focussed on the municipalities of Roura and Mana, located on the Guyana Regional Nature Park. Small-scale farming projects including biomass and energy efficiency techniques are promoted in this context.

The young farmer is a thirty-four-year-old woman, with two children, trained as an agronomist. She worked in rural development institutions, such as ISTOM (international agricultural development), CNASEA (young farmers' setup) and has had a part time job with APAPAG (farmers' advisory services) since 2010. Her aim is to have sufficient income from her farming activity to become a full-time farmer. The reason for this shift from office to fieldwork is that she wants to experiment with innovative agroecological models. She wants to be an entrepreneur who sets up a production model that reflects her values and principles.

Objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- convert land for better accessibility;
- invest in rootstock, irrigation equipment, etc.;
- install and develop fruit growing, agroforestry and vegetable growing activities.

Activities

Due to the field conditions when converting forest into plots, an average period of two years is necessary to reach the production phase. The work that needs to be carried out includes deforestation, construction of access roads, setting up of water supply networks and irrigation systems, construction of greenhouses and farm buildings, electrical connection, etc.

In this context, support from the Rural Development Programme helped to establish fruit and vegetable production in open fields and greenhouses of around 11 hectares, with a sand-clay soil. The support was also used to get equipment for clearing the fields, installing distribution ramps for irrigation and for buying rootstock.

The new farmer is producing zucchini (*Cucurbitapepo*), okra (*Abelmoschusesculentus*), bissap (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*), lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*), cucumber (*Cucumissativus*), chilies and peppers (*Capsicum frutescens*). She also grows pepper plants (*Piper nigrum*), Cupuaçu (*Theobromagrandiflorum*), cherries (*Acerola*) and Ambarellas (*Spondiasdulcis*).

Most of her production goes to a wholesaler, with a small part also sold to small local agro-processing companies and neighbourhood stores.

During the implementation of the project, the young farmer was confronted with a number of challenges. The most significant challenge was not to get discouraged and give up during the major work phase, when there was no harvest yet. At the start, the young farmer did not live locally and had to commute every day. This distance added to the complexity of the work supervision. Once set up, the farm was robbed and the young farmer had to cover the repair costs and buy new equipment. The traditional telecommunication operator does not cover the area and she had to get a costly satellite phone system. Access to the land remains an issue for big work engines such as excavators: this type of work is more costly and slow to get going.

Main results

Since 2016, the young farmer has been able to hire a part-time employee (20 hours / week), though a subsidized employment contract.

In terms of economic outcomes, her production is delivered twice a week to a wholesaler. It corresponds to one ton of vegetables (fruits are not yet produced).

The farm's revenue in 2018 amounted to EUR 8 100 and is expected to increase in the years to come.

Key lessons

Women can play a key role in developing the farming sector. In French Guyana, 60% of small-scale farming is in the hands of female farmers.

The experimental and innovative approach to tropical vegetable and fruit production is a strong asset in this case and several products processed from tropical fruits, such as bissap juice and cupuaçu cream, have the potential to become interesting, niche business developments.

Additional sources of information

www.facebook.com/EuropeEnGuyane/videos/solenn-baron-exploitante-agricole-b%C3%A9n%C3%A9ficiaire/496921190706773/