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RURAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH STRATEGIC VISIONING



IICA Office in Guyana continued execution of its Flagship Projects: 1. Productivity and Sustainability of Family Farming for Food Security and the Rural Economy, 2. Inclusion in Agriculture and Rural Areas, 3. Integrated Environmental Resilience and Risk Management for Agricultural Production, and 4. Competitiveness and Sustainability of Agricultural Chains for Food Security and Economic Development.

In Guyana emphasis will be placed on the first three (3) projects. In the execution of the Flagship Projects relating to Inclusion, Resilience and Family Agriculture, a number of field visits and a workshop were conducted, the aim of which was to develop a methodological guide for organizing groups of rural women, youth and indigenous people and other excluded groups in the participation of decision making instances for rural development. These activities were the first of a series of exchange visits of horizontal cooperation between IICA offices in Suriname and Guyana in collaboration with the National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) which occurred during the period July 26th – 29th, 2015. Both in field and in house discussions were conducted with the IICA team visiting farms and agro-processing units in Capoey, Tapakuma, Lake Mainstay, Charity and New Haven/Sirriki on the Pomeroon River. Additionally, a workshop entitled **“Rural and Economic Transformation through Strategic Visioning”** was held in the Multi-Purpose Hall at the St. Deny’s Mission (Tapakuma) in the Tri-Lakes Community on the Essequibo Coast.

The workshop afforded the institution an opportunity to strengthen the entrepreneurial and associative capacities of the participants in agricultural chains. This interactive workshop targeted farmers and agro-processors from the communities of Tapakuma, Lake Mainstay, Charity and New Haven/Sirriki on the Pomeroon River. Participants were exposed to instruments for the development for project and business proposals to enhance their livelihoods. This was initiated through a number of sessions which began in the form of a discussion on agricultural related potential and ongoing project needs in the communities. The IICA team facilitated idea-generation and prioritizing these for the production of concept notes for agricultural business activities and business plans. Ideas for projects ranged from crop production to agro-eco-tourism.

Also participating, in the workshop were two (2) final year students of Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry University of Guyana. They presented on the topic Rain Water Harvesting which initiated a lively discussion on the adaptability of the technology to the communities, most of which focused on the use of rain water for agricultural purposes. To support this a video on water harvesting in the arid parts of India was shown, illustrating this conservation practice that allowed the availability of water in the dry seasons.

This activity will be replicated in Suriname.