

From Farm to Fork - Del Campo al Plato

Integration of biodiversity in the value chain of agri-food products.

Challenges

About 40% of the world's surface is used for agriculture. According to FAO, agriculture is responsible for 70% of the loss of biodiversity. The negative effects are particularly great in developing countries, where 72% of animal and plant species are endangered by agriculture.

The destruction and degradation of ecosystems and the associated loss of habitat for many animals, plants and microorganisms is particularly dramatic in regions where agricultural crops are grown in monoculture.

Monocultures of pineapples and bananas can have a negative impact on the climate and biodiversity. Intensive agricultural practices damage ecosystems, contribute to soil erosion, affect the water balance and contaminate water and air.

In Germany, bananas are one of the most popular fruits - right after apples. With an average annual consumption of twelve kilos per capita, they are at the top of the popularity scale for tropical fruits. In 2018, Germany imported a net total of around one million tons of bananas - mainly from Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica. Pineapple imports to the EU have stabilised in recent years at around 900,000 tonnes per year. In 2017, Germany imported around 145,000 tonnes.

Bananas and pineapples are the most important agricultural export products of Costa Rica. The production areas of both crops cover almost 90,000 hectares of the country's surface. In the Dominican Republic, about 49% of the 48,000 km² of land is used for agriculture.

Productive agriculture and biodiversity conservation at the same time is possible and must be promoted in order to ensure a secure food supply on the one hand and to protect the diversity of ecosystems and species on the other.

What has been implemented so far

- **15 national and international food standards** were examined with regard to their criteria for biodiversity. The results are summarized in a baseline report. All standards received individual feedback with recommendations for improving the criteria. In a stakeholder process with stakeholders in Germany, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, recommendations for criteria have been developed and published in a brochure.
- **45 agricultural enterprises** with a total area of approx. 25,000 ha made a Biodiversity Check Agrícola BCA. 15 developed a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) based on the measures recommended and started the implementation. This involves measures for improved management of biodiversity as well as for improving agricultural practices to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity (use of pesticides, fertiliser management, soil protection, use of water, waste management, etc.)
- **12 pilot farms** with numerous innovative measures for more biodiversity in banana and pineapple cultivation form a network and support the training measures.
- **A training concept** with modules for consultants and for farmers was developed and tested. 100 farmers and agricultural consultants have already been trained.
- **A Biodiversity Performance App** is being developed to record and evaluate the development of the potential for biodiversity on farms (monitoring).
- In Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, numerous producers contributed to an **ideas competition for biodiversity**. The proposals range from ecological chicken farming in banana plantations to the use of a flying drone for optimized monitoring of natural habitats. The producers receive advice, material and equipment for the implementation of the measures.
- In Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, three regions have been identified for the planning of **biotope corridors** in banana and pineapple-growing areas. Riv-

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erine ecosystems are particularly suitable for this purpose because they form natural corridors that can be improved by appropriate buffer zones. The biotope corridors should link ecosystems and contribute to the protection of endangered species and the preservation of important ecosystem services. Plantation owners and producer groups in the production regions, as well as stakeholders along the entire value chain, are invited to participate in the implementation and "invest" in establishing the corridors based on the plans developed.

- In order to **sensitise** more people to the **value of biological diversity**, close cooperation was established with stakeholders in Germany and beyond. We are a member of Aktionsbündnis Nachhaltige Banane, the initiative "Biodiversity in the Food Sector" (in the process of being established) and the BMZ's Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains Initiative. We currently note a strong increase in interest: Biodiversity is now accepted as a "mega issue". There is great openness for our concepts in the industry.
- **All experiences will be evaluated**, good professional practices will be presented in regional and international networks and forums and producers in other regions will be motivated to adopt them. Conversely, we transfer experiences from initiatives such as the EU LIFE+ project Food & Biodiversity or the development of BAPs for spice farmers in India or with coffee farmers in Colombia.

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Counterpart	Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica; Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic
Budget	5.000.000.000 € (5 million euros)
Duration	4 years (Nov 2018 to Oct 2022)

Our approach

The goals of the project are ambitious: The protection of biodiversity and the associated ecosystem services is to be integrated into the value chains of bananas and pineapples from conventional cultivation. The activities will be implemented mainly in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica.

From Farm to Fork promotes the participation of key players along the value chain. These include food companies and retailers as well as consumers - target groups to which the activities in Germany and the German-speaking market are directed.

The political partners of the project are the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica (MINAE) and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic (MIMARENA).

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