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ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES COUNTRY PAPER  
 Submission by the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture  
 St. Vincent & The Grenadines

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ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

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Agricultural Research Policy

The formulation of the national agricultural research policy is a function of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). The Chief Agricultural Officer (CAO), with directions from the Minister for Trade and Agriculture, has the responsibility of developing the research policy. He is assisted by the Agricultural Officers in deciding on appropriate research areas.

Two commodity associations exist in St. Vincent, viz., the Arrowroot Industry Association (AIA) and the Windward Islands Banana Association (WINBAN). These associations are responsible for research policy in arrowroot and bananas respectively.

National research objectives are mainly problem-oriented. A few are exploratory in nature, i.e. designed for generation of information.

Structural Organization of National System

There is no separate council or other body set up for agricultural research. The MOA is ultimately responsible for all agricultural research. The MOA coordinates and collaborates with other agencies such as the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), WINBAN and AIA at the design stage of research programmes. These organisations and agencies do not participate in any formal way to develop the national research programme but are available for consultation and advice as required.

CARDI has a physical presence in St. Vincent. Their research unit is involved in farming systems research and other research projects as agreed to from time to time. They have established a very close working relationship with the MOA.

As part of a programme of collaboration between the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Republic of China (TAIWAN) a Chinese Agricultural and Technical Mission (CATM) is carrying out work in St. Vincent.

### Management of Agricultural Research Programmes

Planning of research programmes at the operational level and their execution is mainly the responsibility of the AD/Res of the MOA. Programmes are developed which are based on problems observed or expressed by farmers or other persons involved in the agricultural sector.

Major constraints to implementation of programmes are the insufficiency of qualified research staff and the scarcity or absence of adequate research facilities including station. The research budget is comprised almost entirely of operational costs for casual labour and expendable research materials.

Agricultural research projects presently in progress by the MOA include varietal trials in vegetable, e.g. onions and tomatoes, and pest, disease and weed control trials in a wide range of crops. The MOA in collaboration with CARDI is also investigating:

- (a) control of pests in sugar cane, arrowroot and vegetables by an integrated pest management system; and
- (b) control of nematodes in carrots by crop rotation systems.

The CATM through the MOA is evaluating an integrated programme of fish, live-stock and vegetable production and is also evaluating the introduction of 'new' crops in St. Vincent.

CARDI over the past years has been carrying out work on the improvement of technology for peanut production. This institute has also been involved, for the first time, in a farming systems research project in St. Vincent. Both of these programmes are expected to continue for some time. Only quite recently CARDI was requested to initiate work on the improvement of aroid production and arrowroot production in St. Vincent.

WINBAN does not have any active research programme on the ground at the present time but has recently completed investigation on intercropping plant bananas with various other crops.

### Human Resources

The MOA research staff is comprised of just one trained person (B.Sc. with agronomy major). Government does not have any immediate or medium term plans to recruit and/or train additional research staff.

### Relationships with External Agencies

The Research Division of the MOA does not have any formal links with international research organizations neither does it receive financial or technical assistance from such organizations. The MOA does, however, have links with WINBAN, UWI and CARDI and receives technical assistance from them at various times mainly in the form of advice.

### Transmission of Information and Technology

The Extension Division of the MOA is the vehicle through which information and technology generated by research results are transmitted to the farming public. Various methods are in use. The personal contact method comes high on the list but the Extension Staff also employs the group approach to organize workshops, seminars and other meetings where information is exchanged. On-farm demonstrations are also used in situations where a particular practice or technology is to be passed on to farmers.

An Agricultural Information Unit exists within the MOA. One of the responsibilities of this unit is to develop radio programmes. Each week-day, one 10-minute programme with useful information for farmers is presented. In addition the Unit produces a weekly 30-minute "farmers' magazine" programme which, in part, highlights major agricultural developments.

The feedback received by extension staff from the farming public and the direct contact of the research staff with the farming community is the means by which problems and research needs of farmers is transmitted to the research unit.

Evaluation of Research Programmes

There is no formal mechanism in existence for the evaluation of research programmes. Informal evaluations are done from time to time by the AO/Res, the CAO and other Agricultural Officers. Evaluations are qualitative in nature and relate mostly to whether or not farmers are adopting the solutions to problems worked out by the research unit.



