



CAYAB REGIONAL CONSULTATION & VALIDATION SERIES

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SESSION 3 REPORT

Investing in Agricultural Market Infrastructure

Building Resilient Aggregation, Cold Chain and Logistics Systems for the Caribbean

Virtual Consultation | 25 August 2026 | Consultation evidence report

Submitted to: The LoA Committee for review, answers to referred questions, institutional direction and assignment of follow-up responsibilities.

Series theme	Building the Future Together
Policy instrument	Proposed Local Agriculture First Policy (LAFP)
Report status	Consultation evidence—not formal approval, financing or authorization
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This Consultation and Validation Series is an output of the project “Supporting an enabling environment for enhanced youth participation in the CARICOM Agri-food system,” implemented by CARDI with FAO, the CARICOM Secretariat and CAYAB. Financed by the FAO Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division.

1. Purpose, scope and status

This report consolidates the Session 3 rapporteur record and the salient points from the invited keynote contribution. It presents the recommendations, proposed revisions, areas of support, mixed views, unresolved questions and follow-up matters for LoA Committee quality review and institutional direction.

The session examined the market infrastructure and service systems required to connect Caribbean producers with dependable demand, including aggregation, preparation, storage, cold chain, logistics, digital coordination, financing, governance, accessibility, climate resilience and youth enterprise participation.

Important status statement: Session 3 was a consultation and validation exercise. Participation, discussion, poll responses or silence did not constitute approval. The record does not authorize construction, financing or Member State commitments, and the LAFP remains proposed unless approved through the appropriate authority.

2. Executive summary

Session 3 found that agricultural market infrastructure should be treated as an integrated operating system rather than as isolated buildings or equipment. Predictable demand, supplier capacity, aggregation, preparation, storage, cold chain, transportation, digital coordination, delivery, payment and performance information must work together if producers are to reach dependable markets.

A consistent direction emerged that major investments should begin with mapped institutional demand, an assessment of supplier capacity and existing assets, and a clear account of service gaps. Proposed facilities should be demand backed, operator ready, climate resilient, accessible and measurable. Ownership, operation, maintenance, replacement costs, utilization and exit or expansion criteria require explicit resolution before investment.

The keynote contribution reinforced the need to treat agriculture as a productive economic sector, strengthen private-sector and tourism linkages, expand processing, incorporate climate risk and position projects for investment. It also emphasized regional learning and the need to create commercially credible opportunities that attract and retain people in agriculture.

The preferred next step was a bounded national pilot supported by country-level gap mapping and defined performance measures. Evidence should determine whether pilot elements are corrected, expanded, financed further, integrated or discontinued.

3. Key findings for the LoA Committee

- Infrastructure is a system. Aggregation, cold chain, logistics, delivery and digital coordination must be designed as connected functions.
- Verified demand should precede major construction. Demand, supplier capacity, existing assets and gaps must be mapped first.
- Long-term viability requires a defined owner, operator, maintenance plan, revenue model, utilization threshold and accountability mechanism.
- Climate resilience—including water management, irrigation, hurricanes, flooding, drought and heat—must be incorporated into investment preparation.
- Private-sector, tourism, processing and development-finance linkages can expand demand and strengthen commercial viability.
- Young people can participate as suppliers, operators, processors, logisticians, technologists and governors—not only as beneficiaries.

- Accessibility must cover facilities, transportation and digital systems and should be tested with persons with disabilities before implementation.
- A bounded national pilot should generate evidence before wider investment or policy expansion.

4. Direction requested from the LoA Committee

Recommended Committee disposition: Note the Session 3 evidence; answer or refer the unresolved questions below; authorize technical refinement; assign responsible institutions; and request a scoped national-pilot and investment-readiness package for later decision. This is not a request to approve construction or financing.

#	Committee direction requested
1	Confirm the review and approval pathway for revisions to the LAFP infrastructure provisions and any country pilot.
2	Assign responsibility for mapping institutional demand, supplier capacity, existing assets, service gaps and accessibility requirements.
3	Direct preparation of criteria for investment readiness, demand and utilization thresholds, climate resilience and project selection.
4	Clarify acceptable ownership, operating, maintenance, revenue, replacement and public-support models for infrastructure.
5	Identify the authorities responsible for infrastructure standards, logistics, accessibility, financing, digital coordination and monitoring.
6	Authorize preparation of a bounded pilot options paper covering candidate country, products, institutions, routes, operators, safeguards, budget and evidence plan.
7	Define CAYAB's complementary role in youth mobilization, enterprise participation, accessibility feedback, communication and monitoring; assign owners and deadlines in Section 10.

5. Consolidated recommendations and validation status

Area	Recommended direction	Status
Integrated infrastructure	Treat aggregation, preparation, storage, cold chain, logistics, delivery and digital coordination as interconnected LAFP functions.	Supported
Demand mapping	Map institutional demand before major infrastructure decisions.	Supported
Existing assets	Assess opportunities to upgrade, coordinate or repurpose existing assets before new construction.	Supported
Utilization	Require evidence of sufficient demand and utilization before new hubs or major facilities are considered.	Supported
Ownership and operations	Define ownership, operation, maintenance, replacement, monitoring and cost recovery.	Referred
Climate resilience	Integrate climate risk, water management, irrigation and resilient design into planning and finance.	Supported
Logistics and transport	Coordinate product-specific storage, routes, collection points, delivery windows and service providers.	Mixed View
Digital coordination	Connect buyers, suppliers, inventory, orders, transport, delivery, payment and accountability information.	Supported
Supplier visibility	Use a living supplier registry or comparable mechanism without treating it as automatic certification.	Referred
Youth-led services	Enable qualified youth enterprises to participate across infrastructure and market services.	Supported
Accessibility	Apply universal-design and accessibility requirements across facilities, transport and digital systems.	Supported
Community participation	Engage intended users and affected communities before decisions become irreversible.	Supported
Investment readiness	Establish evidence standards for demand, project preparation, climate risk, environmental requirements and viability.	Referred
Private-sector and tourism linkages	Strengthen farm-to-hotel, processing, distribution and other commercial market connections.	Supported
Bounded pilot	Test the relevant LAFP functions through a governed, costed and evaluated national pilot.	Supported

6. Consolidated consultation record

6.1 Integrated infrastructure and supply pathways

Production alone does not secure market access. Products must be aggregated, prepared, stored and delivered according to buyer requirements. A failure in one part of the chain can cause delay, rejection, quality loss or non-payment. **Validation status: Supported**

6.2 Demand mapping, existing assets and utilization

Verified institutional demand should establish required products, quantities, timing and conditions. Supplier capacity, existing assets and service gaps should then be assessed before deciding whether upgrades, coordination or new construction are justified. **Validation status: Supported**

6.3 Ownership, operation and long-term viability

Infrastructure requires clarity on ownership, daily operation, maintenance, replacement, cost recovery, monitoring and the conditions for correction, expansion or exit. Public, cooperative, private, concession and blended models require further review. **Validation status: Referred**

6.4 Cold chain, transportation and delivery

Storage and transportation should reflect product characteristics, temperature, shelf life, handling, geography, routes, collection points and delivery time. Regional transport cost and fragmented island networks remain material concerns. **Validation status: Mixed View**

6.5 Climate resilience and investment readiness

Agricultural investment should incorporate hurricanes, flooding, drought, heat, rainfall variability, water management, irrigation and practical backup arrangements. Projects should demonstrate demand, commercial structure, risk management and operating readiness before financing. **Validation status: Supported; investment criteria referred**

6.6 Digital coordination, traceability and accountability

Physical infrastructure should be supported by accurate supplier, inventory, order, delivery, loss, rejection, temperature, payment and performance information. Digital systems should improve coordination without creating inaccessible or exclusionary barriers. **Validation status: Supported**

6.7 Private-sector, tourism and processing linkages

The keynote contribution positioned agriculture as a productive economic sector linked to processors, distributors, supermarkets, hotels, resorts and export markets. Tourism and value-added processing were identified as important commercial opportunities. **Validation status: Supported**

6.8 National adaptation and bounded pilots

A common regional policy direction can coexist with different national infrastructure arrangements and levels of readiness. A pilot should begin with mapped demand and capacity, identify priority products and routes, and measure delivery, quality, loss, payment, participation, utilization and cost. **Validation status: Supported**

7. Youth enterprise, inclusion and CAYAB's potential role

The consultation identified opportunities for young people in production, aggregation, cold storage, logistics, packaging, processing, digital ordering, traceability, communication and other market services. Youth participation

should therefore be measured through contracts, enterprise opportunities, finance, asset access, technology roles and involvement in governance and evaluation.

CAYAB may help mobilize youth participation, communicate opportunities, identify barriers, connect youth enterprises with pilot processes and monitor inclusion. These functions should complement—not displace—existing statutory, regulatory, financing or infrastructure mandates.

Role boundary to resolve: The LoA Committee should clarify which functions CAYAB may perform directly, which require delegation or partnership, and which must remain with competent national and regional authorities.

8. Areas of support, concern and referral

Areas of support expressed

- Treat market infrastructure as an integrated supply and service pathway.
- Begin investment planning with demand, capacity, asset and gap mapping.
- Embed climate resilience and water management in project preparation.
- Create youth enterprise opportunities beyond primary production.
- Strengthen tourism, processing, private-sector and development-finance linkages.
- Apply accessibility requirements from the outset.
- Use bounded pilots to generate evidence before wider expansion.

Concerns and mixed views

- Inter-island transportation cost and fragmented logistics remain significant constraints.
- Limited viable agricultural land may constrain production response.
- Farmers may be unable to afford infrastructure services even where facilities exist.
- Long-term sustainability requires clear ownership, operation, maintenance, revenue and public-support arrangements.
- Persons with disabilities may remain excluded unless transport, physical and digital barriers are addressed.
- New facilities risk underutilization if demand and operating models are not established first.

9. Questions requiring answers or further technical review

1. What evidence will determine whether existing aggregation, cold-chain and logistics assets are sufficient?
2. What demand and utilization thresholds should justify a new hub or major facility?
3. Which ownership and operating models are appropriate for different infrastructure categories?
4. How will operation, maintenance, replacement and accessibility costs be financed over the asset life?
5. What investment-readiness evidence should be mandatory before projects are submitted for financing?
6. How will equitable and affordable access be protected for small, rural, emerging and youth-led producers?
7. Which accessibility standards will apply to facilities, transportation and digital systems, and who will test compliance?
8. How should transportation and trade-coordination challenges across Member States be addressed?
9. How will candidate national pilots be selected, governed, financed and independently evaluated?
10. Which indicators will determine whether a pilot is continued, modified, expanded or discontinued?
11. How will youth-led enterprises be incorporated into aggregation, logistics, processing, communication and technology services?
12. How should CAYAB's role be defined in relation to existing national and regional mandates?

10. Proposed follow-up and accountability record

Follow-up action	Status	Proposed owner	Deadline
Consolidate Session 3 evidence and keynote findings.	Completed through this report	CAYAB	28 Aug 2026
Quality-review the record and answer or refer the questions in Section 9.	Decision requested	LoA Committee / CARDI / FAO	To be assigned
Refine LAFP provisions on aggregation, cold chain, logistics, digital coordination, accessibility and climate resilience.	Proposed	To be assigned	To be assigned
Develop country-level demand, supplier-capacity, asset and gap-mapping methodology.	Proposed	To be assigned	To be assigned
Establish investment-readiness and demand/utilization criteria for infrastructure projects.	Referred	To be assigned	To be assigned
Prepare ownership, operating, maintenance, revenue and financing model options.	Referred	To be assigned	To be assigned
Prepare a bounded national pilot options paper with governance, budget, safeguards and indicators.	Proposed	To be assigned	To be assigned
Define accessibility assessment and participation mechanisms involving persons with disabilities.	Proposed	To be assigned	To be assigned
Define pathways for youth-led service enterprises and CAYAB's complementary role.	Referred	LoA Committee / relevant authorities	To be assigned
Open structured engagement with development-finance and private-sector partners after investment criteria are agreed.	Proposed	To be assigned	To be assigned

11. Validation status definitions

Status	Meaning
Supported	Clear supportive statements were expressed. This does not constitute formal adoption, financing or approval.

Status	Meaning
Mixed View	Supportive observations were accompanied by material concerns requiring refinement.
Unresolved	The issue remained open or lacked a sufficiently clear conclusion.
Referred	Further technical, governance, institutional or policy review is required.
No formal determination recorded	The topic was discussed, but the record does not establish consensus or a decision.

12. Privacy, safeguarding and attribution

The substantive consultation record is presented thematically rather than as a speaker-by-speaker transcript. The invited keynote contribution is identified by role only because the supplied salient-points record did not state the contributor’s name. No privacy, youth-protection or conflict-of-interest incident requiring escalation was established in the two records reviewed.

Accessibility was recorded as an economic-participation and safeguarding requirement. Persons with disabilities should participate in the assessment and testing of physical, transport and digital systems before implementation.

13. Closing record

Session 3 contributed practical consultation evidence on the infrastructure and service systems required for LAFP implementation. It did not approve the LAFP, authorize construction or commit financing. The central lesson is that infrastructure investment must be demand backed, connected across the supply pathway, climate resilient, accessible, operator ready and measurable.

A bounded national pilot—preceded by demand, capacity, asset and gap mapping—emerged as the preferred route for generating evidence. The report is submitted to the LoA Committee for quality review, answers to referred questions, institutional direction and assignment of the next technical steps.

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