



Comparative analysis of production and market of medicinal and aromatic plants in Costa Rica, Jamaica and Brazil. Current situation and opportunities

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SUMMARY

In order to provide significant information about the partner's countries of the project Erasmus+ Herbs for Youth, a comparative analyses of the medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) situation in Brazil, Costa Rica and Jamaica was implemented in 2016. The methodology consisted firstly in describing the socioeconomic features and developing strategies of the involved countries. Secondly, listing in the local MAPs species used by the society and deepening in which ones are currently cultivated and marketed. Furthermore, an overview of the existing organisations dealing with MAPs and/or rural development has been made. Finally, a SWOT analyses has been elaborated for each country regarding economy, wild collection, cultivation, traditional uses and trade of MAPs, and common conclusions evaluated.

In order to adjust to the specificities, the country analyses in Brazil has been focused Alagoas State, in the Northeast region. Alagoas State has an area of 27.767 km² and a population density around 110 people/km², while the Caribbean island of Jamaica is 10.991 km² and has 248 people/km² and the Central American Costa Rica 51.032 km² and 89 people/km². The share of Gross Domestic Product (GPD) in Agriculture is 7,3% in Alagoas, 7,2% in Costa Rica and 5,6% in Jamaica, being more important the services (tourism). They share some crops like sugar cane, coffee and bananas, producing other products like tobacco, cotton and eucalyptus in Alagoas, and cocoa, citrus and allspice in Jamaica. All countries are exporters of *Piper* and *Capsicum* spices, and other medicinal plants.

They share common species like *Cymbopogon citratus*, *Eryngium foetidum*, *Smilax sp.*, *Mentha sp.*, *Justicia pectoralis*, *Lippia alba*, *Zingiber officinale*, etc. that are interesting herbs. Most of the species still come from the wild, and most demanded ones are being studied for initiating programmes of domestication. The quality of the raw material is still very low, due to lack of training of producers and lack of marketing structures among producers, as the majority of the producers are small farmers.

Each country has specific features regarding their development strategies in relation to MAPs:

- ✓ Jamaica has an agricultural plan for enhancing exports of herbs and spices.
- ✓ Alagoas (Brazil) has an agricultural plan for promoting local medicinal plants: local cultivation for improve health of local populations.
- ✓ Costa Rica is addressing to the valorization of local flora for pharmaceuticals and also to enhance ecotourism. Producers are focusing to elaborated products.

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