



Smallholder Farmer Platform – North and Northeast Haiti

We plant today so we can feed ourselves tomorrow

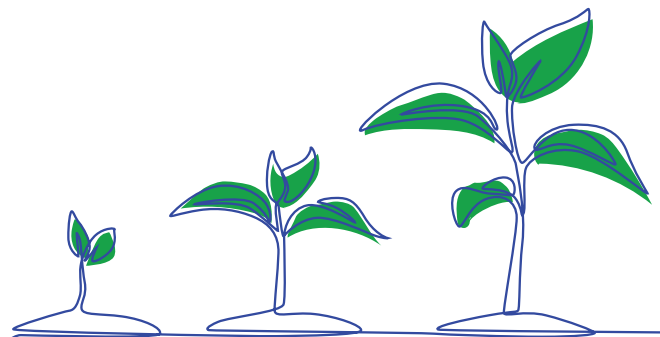
SUMMARY

This platform reflects the shared priorities of smallholder farmer organizations in North and Northeast Haiti. It is addressed to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MARNDR) as they design a new \$44 million agricultural program for the region.

A recent survey of 1,100 farmers in 74 communities confirms they face consistent challenges—lack of water, seeds, credit, tools, and market access—but have had little influence over how resources are allocated, or programs are designed. This platform calls for a different approach.

OUR GOALS

- 1 Make locally-led agriculture an engine for food security and economic development
- 2 Empower youth and women to see a future in agriculture
- 3 Enable farmers to capture more of the value they produce
- 4 Build capacity of Haitian government and civic institutions to help farmers overcome the structural barriers to local production and adapt to drought and climate change.



OUR PRIORITIES



1. **Consultation:** IDB and MARNDR must hold listening sessions in every commune before finalizing project design. Farmers are agents of change, and must have their voices heard.



2. **Water Management:** The region needs a comprehensive water management plan that protects the Plaine du Nord–Massacre Aquifer and prioritizes smallholder access.



3. **Irrigation:** More than 90% of farmers rely entirely on rainfall. Immediate investment in solar pumps, irrigation channels, and water storage is essential.



4. **Seed Banks:** Establish permanent community seed banks and a network of local seed multipliers in each Department to build a locally controlled, sustainable seed system.



5. **Education and Training:** Deploy locally trained agronomists in every farming commune and establish training facilities to support generational renewal.



6. **Agroecology and Soil Health:** Invest in soil restoration, agroforestry, and reforestation.



7. **Cooperative Farming:** Support farmer associations and cooperatives to pool land, labor, and resources. Replace individual vouchers with community-based models.



8. **Tool Banks:** Invest in shared tool banks managed by cooperatives.



9. **Access to Credit:** Support community-managed credit funds with low-interest loans tied to production cycles.



10. **Fencing, Livestock, and Land Tenure:** Fund community fencing to protect crops, integrate livestock into smallholder production systems, and support efforts to resolve land tenure.



11. **Risk Insurance:** Develop accessible crop insurance and early warning systems.



12. **Roads:** Rehabilitate feeder roads to connect farming areas to markets.



13. **Food Processing:** Invest in community-based storage and processing facilities to retain more value within communities.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

1 Consultation

Foreign-financed agricultural projects have fallen short of their goals because they have failed to adequately consult smallholder farmers. Better results require treating Haitian organizations as full partners, respecting local knowledge, and consulting farmers and their organizations at every stage, from evaluation of past projects through design, implementation, and monitoring.



A recent OPODHA survey of 1,100 farmers across 74 communities confirms that farmers face consistent, well-understood challenges—lack of water, seeds, credit, tools, and market access—but have had little influence over how resources are allocated, or programs are designed.

The IDB and MARNDR should engage in a broad listening process with smallholder farmers and their associations **before making design decisions** and seeking IDB Board approval for the new \$44 million sustainable agriculture project in the North and Northeast departments.

This consultation process should include:

- 1.1 Working with established smallholder farmer associations to hold listening sessions in **each commune** where the project intends to operate.
- 1.2 Participation of **District Directors of Agriculture** and **Communal Agricultural Officers** in these meetings.
- 1.3 These are **listening** sessions: IDB and MARNDR should hear directly from farmers in each commune about their priorities.
- 1.4 Using of survey findings to guide discussion of priorities.
- 1.5 Clear documentation of farmer priorities before project design is finalized.

Smallholder farmers must be treated as agents of change, rather than victims or beneficiaries.

2 Water Management Plan

North and Northeast Haiti have suffered from drought conditions for more than a decade. Lack of rainwater, dry soil conditions, deforestation, and lowered groundwater levels, which undermine shallow wells, create difficult obstacles and risks for smallholder farmers.



Survey findings confirm that drought is the single largest cause of crop loss, affecting nearly half of farmers, while flooding and poor drainage also contribute significantly to losses. At the same time, farmers report that more than half of farming areas have access to nearby water sources but lack the infrastructure to use them effectively.

The Plaine du Nord–Massacre Aquifer is a critical source of water for farmers and other users in the North and Northeast. However, in the absence of planning and environmental protection, the aquifer is being drained and undermined by large-scale withdrawals by large producers and by increasing saltwater intrusion in coastal areas.

The North and Northeast require a region-wide water management, distribution, and watershed protection plan that balances the needs of smallholder farmers, households, and larger users.

IDB and MARNDR should coordinate closely with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications, National Directorate for Water Supply and Sanitation, Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation, and Ministry of Interior and Territorial Collectivities. These institutions should work alongside communal governments, CASEC and ASEC authorities, local water user associations and peasant organizations, to co-create **a comprehensive water management plan for the Plaine du Nord–Massacre Aquifer** that balances water usage.

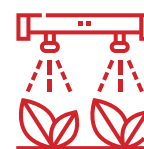
The water management plan should include:

- 2.1** Regulation of large-scale water extraction to protect the aquifer
- 2.2** Watershed protection and reforestation measures
- 2.3** Mapping of water resources and usage across the region, building on existing research
- 2.4** Investments in deeper wells, piping, and catchment basins to make water available where it is needed
- 2.5** Community rainwater cisterns to capture and store water during rainy seasons for use during dry periods
- 2.6** Governance structures that include local water user groups

The plan should enable local communities and small-scale farmers to adapt to drought in a long-term, sustainable way.

3 Irrigation

Farmers consistently identify irrigation as the most immediate constraint on production. Drought, lowering of the water table, shallow wells drying up, and deterioration of existing irrigation infrastructure all contribute to low production or land lying fallow.



Survey findings show that more than 90% of farmers lack access to irrigation and rely almost entirely on rainfall. Even in areas where water is available, most farmers lack the equipment and infrastructure needed to use it.

Funding from IDB to MARNDR should be used to provide farmer associations and cooperatives with small-scale irrigation systems for immediate use.

- 3.1 Rapid irrigation** investments should include:
 - i. Solar-powered pumps
 - ii. Small irrigation channels
 - iii. Rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems
 - iv. Low-cost technologies adapted to smallholder plots

3.2 Additional irrigation investments should include:

- i. Drilling deeper wells where needed
- ii. Installing piping systems to distribute water
- iii. Building catchment basins and water storage systems
- iv. Renewable energy systems — including solar — to power irrigation equipment and reduce operating costs for farmer associations

Support should work through water associations and smallholder farmer cooperatives to reinforce collaboration among farmers and ensure long-term maintenance.

4

Seed Banks

Lack of access to high-quality seeds is one of the most common challenges facing smallholder farmers in the North and Northeast.



More than 70% of farmers report purchasing seeds from public markets, where quality is inconsistent; very few have access to certified seed suppliers or report receiving seeds from institutions; and most communities lack input stores altogether. These patterns are consistent across communes in both departments.

Previous projects have relied on imported seeds, large suppliers, vouchers, and short-term distribution rather than building sustainable local seed systems.

IDB and MARNDR should support the establishment of (a) permanent Community Seed Banks in each Department, as well as (b) the development of local small-scale seed multipliers that can produce and sell seeds to seed banks and directly to farmers.

4.1 Community Seed Bank facilities should include:

- i. Storage infrastructure to preserve seed quality
- ii. Qualified technicians to manage seed systems
- iii. Systems for multiplication and distribution of local seeds
- iv. The ability of farmers to borrow high-quality seeds and return them with an increase in quantity after harvest.

4.2 Seed Multipliers should include:

- i. Small-scale, family-based operations
- ii. Training for seed multipliers in production, harvesting, processing, storage, and quality testing.
- iii. Access to foundation or breeder seeds from research institutions.
- iv. Small grants or low-interest loans for seed cleaning, treatment, and packaging equipment.
- v. Quality assurance systems adapted to local capacity (not requiring full international certification).
- vi. Contracts or purchase agreements between seed multipliers and community seed banks to create a stable market.

Having both community seed banks and local private multipliers would create a sustainable, locally rooted seed value chain that is not dependent on imported seeds or external donors. Additional support should include research to identify and improve local seed varieties.

These efforts should draw on best practices from other Haitian seed banks, such as at Camp-Perrin.

5 Education and Training



Farmers in North and Northeast Haiti need technical assistance and training that is integrated into the region's social fabric and respects existing knowledge and community practices.

Agriculture is now largely carried out by older farmers, with limited youth participation, in part because farming is not profitable and lacks support systems. Survey findings show the majority of farmers are over 45 years old, highlighting the urgency of generational renewal.

IDB and MARNDR should work with local peasant and civic organizations to support and expand existing infrastructure to prepare young people for agricultural careers.

This support should include:

- 5.1** A well-equipped, community-based education and training facility in each Department, capable of training young people to work as agricultural and veterinary technicians.
- 5.2** Locally trained agronomists available to smallholder farmers in every farming commune in the two departments.
- 5.3** Ongoing technical support for farmers on soil, water, and crop management and environmental sustainability.
- 5.4** Integration of training with irrigation, seed systems, and cooperative activities
- 5.5** Training on post-harvest value-added practices, including handling, storage, quality grading, and market linkages.
- 5.6** Value chain integration - how to access market opportunities, negotiate with buyers, meet quality and volume requirements, manage collective sales, build relationships with input suppliers, transporters, and financial institutions.
- 5.7** Business management for farmer organizations - record-keeping, cost accounting, pricing, collective bargaining, governance of shared processing or storage assets.
- 5.8** Training in the operation and basic maintenance of agricultural equipment, to ensure tools and irrigation systems remain functional after project completion.

Agronomists should work through peasant associations to assist farmers in adapting their farming to drought and climate change, adopting practices that protect the environment and watersheds, and increasing the value farmers and their communities derive from their efforts.

6 Agroecology, Soil Health, and Reforestation

Decades of deforestation, soil erosion, and input-dependent farming have degraded the land that smallholder farmers depend on. And many farmers farm in mountainous areas. Restoring soil health and rebuilding tree cover are necessary for sustainable agricultural productivity and long-term food security.



Evidence from northern Haiti demonstrates that agroecological farming works. A 2023 study conducted with Partenariat pou Devlopman Lokal (PDL), a Haitian peasant organization working in northern Haiti — based on surveys of 330 households and satellite data analysis — found that agroecological farmers achieved double the per-hectare profitability of conventional farmers. These gains were achieved through farmer-centered, decentralized innovation spread through peasant associations and farmer-to-farmer training through the peasant associations and civic organizations that are rooted in their communities.

Healthy soils retain water, reducing vulnerability to drought. Agroforestry systems provide shade, prevent erosion, and recharge groundwater — including the Plaine du Nord–Massacre Aquifer on which the region depends. Reforestation of hillsides and watersheds protects farming areas downstream from flooding and sedimentation.

Elements of an agroecology strategy should include:

- 6.1 Soil restoration** — composting, cover cropping, intercropping, and managed fallowing to rebuild organic matter, increase water retention, reduce topsoil loss, and improve climate resilience
- 6.2 Agroforestry** — integrating fruit, timber, and nitrogen-fixing trees into farming systems to improve soil fertility, provide shade, diversify farmer income, and reduce mudslides
- 6.3 Reforestation** — community-led replanting of hillsides, riverbanks, and watershed areas using locally adapted species
- 6.4 Farmer-to-farmer extension** — building on the proven model of peasant associations spreading agroecological knowledge horizontally, rather than relying on external technical advisors
- 6.5 Reduced input dependency** — support for farmers to transition toward locally produced organic inputs and reduce reliance on imported fertilizers and pesticides
- 6.6 Drought-resistant varieties** — prioritizing locally adapted, climate-resilient seed varieties through the community seed bank system
- 6.7 Support for farmers working hillside and mountainous terrain** — including terracing, contour farming, and erosion control adapted to sloped plots where land degradation is most severe.
- 6.8 Community seedling nurseries** — managed by farmer organizations to produce fruit tree and forestry seedlings for agroforestry and reforestation programs, including local varieties such as sour orange, lemon, and lime that are disappearing from the region.

These practices should be integrated into the technical training curriculum and supported by agronomists working alongside farmer associations. The goal is to strengthen, resource, and scale what farmers know works.

7 Cooperative farming

Smallholder farmers in the North and Northeast are working on small, fragmented plots, which limits productivity and makes it difficult to invest in irrigation, tools, or improved practices.



Yet most agricultural programs have focused on individual farmers – often selected at random – rather than on strengthening cooperative production and shared infrastructure.

IDB and MARNDR should support cooperative farming models that allow farmers to pool land, labor, and resources where appropriate.

Support should prioritize:

- 7.1** Strengthening existing smallholder farmer associations and cooperatives
- 7.2** Shared production zones for priority crops
- 7.3** Collective access to irrigation, tools, and storage
- 7.4** Governance structures that ensure transparency and accountability

This approach reflects how farmers already collaborate informally and builds toward stronger economic power and bargaining capacity.

Equity of Access: Any component of the agricultural project that involves vouchers or other forms of support for farmers should be made available to all farmers in pilot areas who meet the project criteria, to avoid creating distrust among farmers and undermining cooperative efforts.

8 Tool Banks

Agriculture in the region is overwhelmingly manual. Survey findings show that more than 70% of farmers rely on traditional tools, and less than 2% have access to tractors. This severely limits productivity and increases the physical burden on an aging farming population.



IDB and MARNDR should invest in shared access to modern agricultural tools through farmer associations and cooperatives, rather than individual distribution.

This should include:

- 8.1** Tool banks managed at the communal or cooperative level
- 8.2** Access to plows, pumps, oxen, and small-scale mechanization
- 8.3** Maintenance and repair systems at the local level

Tools should be accessible, affordable, and adapted to smallholder farming conditions.

9 Access to Credit

Lack of affordable credit is a primary barrier to agricultural investment. More than one-third of farmers identify money as their main constraint. Outside community-based loan funds, smallholder farmers face exorbitant borrowing costs compared to larger producers.



IDB and MARNDR should move away from short-term input subsidies and instead support sustainable, locally managed credit systems.

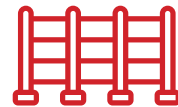
This should include:

- 9.1** Community-based credit funds managed by farmer organizations
- 9.2** Low-interest loans tied to production cycles
- 9.3** Integration with cooperative structures and seed banks
- 9.4** Technical support to ensure productive use of credit

Credit systems should strengthen local economic systems rather than increase dependence on external suppliers.

10 Fencing, Livestock, and Land Tenure

Free-range livestock is a persistent challenge that damages crops and discourages investment in agriculture. Farmers consistently identify fencing as a priority infrastructure need to protect their fields. The need for fencing is connected to the larger problems of land tenure and the integration of livestock and crops. Insecure land tenure discourages farmers from making long-term investments in their fields.



IDB and MARNDR should support:

- 10.1** Community-level fencing initiatives in key agricultural zones
- 10.2** Cost-sharing mechanisms through farmer associations
- 10.3** Integration of fencing into broader land tenure and production planning
- 10.4** Support for securing land tenure for smallholder farmers, including documentation of existing land rights, as a foundation for long-term agricultural investment
- 10.5** Support for integrating animal agriculture as part of smallholder production systems

Fencing and more secure land titles are basic but necessary condition for improving productivity and enabling more intensive agriculture.

11 Risk Insurance

Farmers face constant risk from drought, excessive rain, insects, and poor-quality seeds, with drought alone accounting for nearly half of crop losses, as reflected in survey findings from farmers across the region. These risks discourage investment and reinforce cycles of poverty.



IDB and MARNDR should support the development of accessible agricultural risk management systems, including:

- 11.1** Crop insurance adapted to smallholder farmers
- 11.2** Risk-sharing mechanisms through cooperatives
- 11.3** Early warning systems and climate information
- 11.4** Technical support from agronomists in managing risk and making planting decisions

These systems should be simple, transparent, and designed for farmers with limited financial resources.

12 Road infrastructure

Farmers overwhelmingly sell their products at public markets, often at low prices due to limited transport and market access. Poor road infrastructure increases post-harvest losses and limits access to better markets.



IDB and MARNDR should invest in:

- 12.1** Rehabilitation of feeder roads connecting farming areas to markets
- 12.2** Collective transportation that enables smallholder farmers to work together to get their crops to market
- 12.3** Maintenance systems involving local communities
- 12.4** Integration with production and storage investments

Roads are essential to ensure that increased production translates into increased income.

13 Food processing



Farmers report significant losses at harvest due to a lack of storage, transformation (processing), and market access. Without processing capacity, agricultural production remains low-value and highly vulnerable to price fluctuations.

IDB and MARNDR should support local community-based food processing and storage infrastructure, including:

- 13.1** Small-scale facilities for processing fruits and crops (juice, flour, preserved goods)
- 13.2** Community-managed storage and conservation systems
- 13.3** Training in processing and value addition
- 13.4** Renewable energy infrastructure — including solar — to power storage and processing facilities and reduce dependence on fuel.
- 13.5** Community grain mills managed by farmer cooperatives to reduce processing costs and retain more value within communities.

These investments should be linked to cooperative structures and local markets so that more value is retained within communities.

This platform has been developed and is supported by the following organizations in North and Northeast Haiti:

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement d’Haïti, Terrier Rouge
Centre d’Agriculture Saint Barnabas (CASB), Terrier Rouge
Groupement Agricole Ouvray (GAO), Terrier Rouge
Coopérative Agricole Rabourée de Terrier-Rouge (CART)
Initiative pour le Développement Durable d’Haïti (IDDH)
Partenariat pour le Développement Local (PDL)
Fon Lanbi Pou Ayiti (Lambi Fund of Haiti)
Organisation pour le Développement de Femmes Émancipées d’Haïti (ODFEH)
Association des Brigadiers Maritimes Actifs de Caracol (ABMAC)
Association des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Welsh (ACEDEW)
Association des Citoyens pour le Développement de Pilette (ACIDEF)
Association des Patriotes pour le Développement de Dolval (ACPAD)
Association des Paysans Lombard pour le Développement de Caracol (APLODEC)
Association des Paysans pour le Développement de Caracol (Bas Saline) (APDAC)
Association des Producteurs de Laits et Éleveurs de Ferrier (APLEF)
Combite Paysanne pour le Développement de Lamatrie (COPADEL)

Konbit Volontè pou Devlopman Capotille (KOVDEC)

Men nan Men pou Devlopman Laguamithe (MAFEL)

Mouvement Chrétien pour le Développement de Mont-Organisé (MCDMO)

Mouvman Peyizan Gran Savann (MPG)

Mouvman pou Devlope Agrikilti ak Elvaj nan Karakòl (MODAEC)

Oganizasyon Peyizan pou Devlopman Sylvestre (OPDS)

Organisation Active pour le Développement de Sarazin (OCADES)

Organisation Chrétienne pour l'Avancement de Phaéton (OCAPH)

Organisation Communautaire pour le Développement de Bois-de-Laurence (OCDEB)

Organisation Communautaire pour le Développement de Grand-Bassin (OCODEG)

Organisation des Citoyens Actifs pour le Développement de Côtelette (OCADEC)

Organisation des Citoyens Actifs pour le Développement de Roqué (OCADER)

Organisation des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Bois-Blanc (OCEDEB)

Organisation des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Camizard (OCEDEC)

Organisation des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Dupity (OCEDEP)

Organisation des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Mocaneuf (OCEDEM)

Organisation des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Sainte-Suzanne (OCEDES)

Organisation des Citoyens pour le Développement de Fort-Liberté (OCIDEF)

Organisation des Citoyens pour le Développement de Trou-du-Nord (OCDETNO)

Organisation des Femmes Actives pour le Développement de Cahesse (OFADC)

Organisation des Leaders Avisés pour le Développement de Corosse (Kòwòs) (OLADK)

Organisation des Leaders Avisés pour le Développement de Vallières (OLADVA)

Organisation des Paysans Engagés pour le Développement de Roméo/Malfety (DREMOP)

Organisation des Peuples Luttant pour le Développement Durable Mont-Organisé (OPLDDMO)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Acul-Samedi (OPODAS)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Bas-Perches (OPODEBP)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Cachiman (OPODCA)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Carice (OPODNEC)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Carrefour Sifréus (OPODNE/
Carrefour Sifréus)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Garates (OPODGA)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Garde-Saline (OPODGAS)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Grosse-Roche (OPODEG)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Haut-des-Perches (OPODEHP)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Haute-Madeleine (OPODMA)

Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Juchereau (OPODJ)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Lafleur (OPOLEF)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Loguatte (OPODL)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Mon-Repos (OPODNE/Mon-Repos)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Paulette (OPODEP)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Roche Plate (OPODR)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Saillant (OPODSA)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement du Centre-Ville de Mombin Crochu (OPODCM)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement du Nord-Est / Village EKAM (OPODNE/EKAM)
Organisation pour le Développement Communautaire de Bois Pindry (ODCB)
Organisation pour le Développement de Savane-Carré (ODSAC)
Solidarité Citoyens Actions Libres (SOCIAL)
Tèt Ansanm pou Devlopman Lahatte (TADAH)
Union des Leaders pour le Développement de Terrier-Rouge (ULADET)
Action des Campinordais Engagés (ACE)
Organisation Solidarité pour le Développement de Bassin-Caiman (OSPDB)
Organisation des Citoyens Engagés pour le Développement de Grison-Garde (OCEDG)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Balan de Morne-Rouge (OPODBAM)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Bois-de-Lance (OPODEB)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Bouyaha (OPODB)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Fleury/Nord (OPODNOF)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Limonade (OPODEL)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Mathador/Nord (OPODNOM)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de Quartier Morin (OPODEQ)
Organisation des Peuples Œuvrant pour le Développement de l'Acul du Nord (OPODAN)
Organisation pour le Développement de Caimite (ODC)
Organisation pour le Développement de Labruyère (ODL)
Organisation pour le Développement de Pister (ODP)
