

## Promoting family farming as a means to tackle poverty, improve rural livelihoods and decrease childhood malnutrition

This EU-funded project aims to verify how Guatemala tracks the performance of its national programme to support subsistence farmers and strengthen government capacity to monitor and improve its interventions going forward



Photo by Lara Natalia



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As part of its external aid to Guatemala, the EU signed a Financing Agreement to support the reduction of poverty in 22 municipalities of Quiché and Alta Verapaz in the north-central region of the country. The main intervention of such efforts is a programme promoting rural family farming by strengthening subsistence or “campesina” agriculture: Programa de Agricultura Familiar para el Fortalecimiento de la Economía Campesina or PAFFEC for short.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food is implementing PAFFEC, which also aims to increase poor farmers’ resilience to climate change, and thus is receiving support from the EU to establish an tracking and monitoring system, improve its agricultural extension programme and strengthen its capacity in public finance and results-based management. The EU is releasing the funds in tranches, and Guatemala must meet certain indicators to receive the indicated budget.

This assignment, which began in September 2018 and runs until December 2020, is mostly a verification mission of PAFFEC’s performance to enable the release of funds to Guatemala while supporting the strengthening of institutional capacity to track PAFFEC’s progress. There are four key objectives: validate the ministry’s budget support indicator reports for PAFFEC, check the process and result indicators of PAFFEC, and review and make recommendations - if needed - on how PAFFEC is tracked and monitored and, in addition, on the Government’s overall Information, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System (SIPSE).

### Increasing the availability and consumption of food among the rural poor

PAFFEC emerged as part of Guatemala’s national framework policy on rural development, which places an emphasis on sustainable farming and improved food security as a means to tackle poverty. The current programme is a continuation of earlier efforts to reduce chronic malnutrition among young children by promoting family farming in poor and extreme poverty households through inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination and strengthening of the national rural extension system. In addition to strengthening the production, organisation and self-management capacities of rural subsistence farmers, PAFFEC aims to increase access to markets and value chains and build institutional capacity to monitor and evaluate performance.

160,000

estimated rural families receiving direct support via PAFFEC interventions

80%

of farms in Latin America and the Caribbean are subsistence or family farming types common in the peasant or “campesina” economy

#### Donor

European Commission

#### Clients

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food

#### Location

Guatemala

#### Contract value

€270,472

#### TA value

€109,600

#### Duration

September 2018 - December 2020



A key objective of PAFFEC has always been to fight poverty and reduce malnutrition among children.

"It is our belief that extreme poverty and malnutrition are consequences of a rural area without development. By promoting the peasant economy and social inclusion, we aim to focus on expanding opportunities for children and youth so that they can develop and find productive options that allow them to have a better life. The purpose is to make them actors in their own development and that they do not depend solely on the State to get ahead."

**Otto Fernando Pérez Molina**  
Guatemala President, 2012-2015

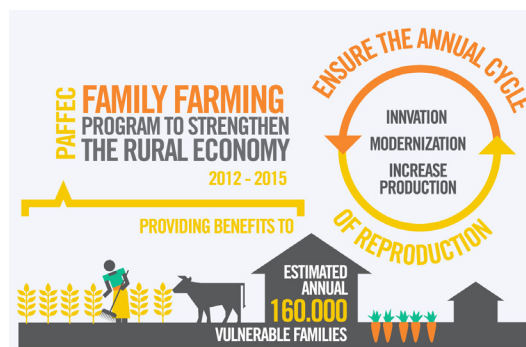
**Family farming is "the interaction of a family with nature, where sustainable agricultural production processes are developed based on their ancestral knowledge, local resources and technological innovations to improve livelihoods. It takes place in family production units, aimed at satisfying the basic needs of its members and communities. Family farming has as principles solidarity, respect for the exercise of rights, recognition and contribution of each family member, and exchange and balance with the nature and the peasant economy". 2016-2020 PAFFEC summary**

To ensure continued release of PAFFEC funds, the NIRAS-led project has several deliverables. We are verifying the budget support/PAFFEC performance indicators set out in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food's 2017 and 2018 reports, conducting a comparative analysis of the PAFFEC's 2014-2018 indicators in 189 municipalities, validating the indicators and updating the baseline, improving SIPSE's computer platform, and making recommendations on the management of the Ministry's database of its beneficiaries

NIRAS is working with subcontractor CEDER, who is conducting surveys among families to better understand the nutritional practices of the families and what kind of crops they produce and in what quantities. The surveys will be used to validate the PAFFEC indicators and update them where necessary.

**Delivered to date**

At the time of writing, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food's 2017 and 2018 performance indicators had been verified and concerns were raised. The 2018 report is an improvement on the 2017 version: analysis of indicators has improved and the database contains more accurate information. However, the system for collecting information could be better in terms of methodology and supervision. Moreover, part of the information generated in the territory remains in the municipal and departmental offices and does not reach the central offices, meaning that a large amount of information is generated,



A continuation of an earlier programme, PAFFEC runs from 2016 to 2020.

which is then not entered into the system or analysed. The ministry recognises these weaknesses and has requested assistance to improve the situation.

The team has recommended the development and implementation of a practical training plan for extension workers on data collection and the creation of a system for monitoring the quality of the generated information. Removal of errors from the database must be ongoing to ensure the reliability of the information registered there and the capacity of local authorities to analyse data should be ramped up. Finally, the computer architecture of SIPSE needs to be modernised thus the team has recommended the development of SIPSE II to increase ease of access for users, enable handling of big data, and improve visualization and the compatibility with tablets, cell phones etc.

