

## Leaving behind a stronger El Salvador

### During seven years and two projects, Fintrac dramatically increases farmers' sales and sets standard for sustainability

SAN SALVADOR — When Fintrac closed out the Agricultural Diversification Program (ADP) in El Salvador in 2009, it marked the completion of Fintrac's seven-year tenure in the country. The project built on the success of the previous program, IDEA, and helped farmers and agribusinesses generate \$76 million in new sales by introducing them to improved production and processing methods and opening doors to new markets.

Fintrac agronomists made more than 24,000 farm extension visits and assisted more than 7,500 clients.

One client farmer, Luciano Garcia, saw his profits skyrocket when Fintrac helped him build a low-cost greenhouse and provided technical assistance for tomato production. In his first year, he made a profit of \$5,495, far greater than the \$478 he made on average before receiving Fintrac assistance.

In another intervention, Fintrac helped the Juárez family in La Paz improve their small cashew processing operation by introducing them to new equipment that increased their output of processed nuts and increased their gross income from \$2,800 to \$7,588.

Carmen Vásquez de Cartagena from Chalatenaga, saw how growers near her farm in La Palma were able to increase their income with assistance from Fintrac. She stopped running a failing teak wood business and started with the ADP program in 2007.

"It was a new opportunity to succeed," Vásquez said.

Under a co-financing agreement with the program, she built a greenhouse and established a calendarized system of tomato production. Today she earns \$2,300 monthly from her farm and plans to diversify and expand.

Fintrac started in El Salvador in 2002, when it launched the USAID-funded IDEA program, which generated \$21 million in new sales. When IDEA ended in 2006, Fintrac set out to see how former client farmers were doing after they graduated from the program.

The survey found that nearly all graduate clients continued to implement the practices promoted by the program, including drip irrigation, raised beds,



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Fintrac client farmer Luciano Garcia shows off tomatoes at his greenhouse in El Salvador.

pesticide safety measures, and integrated pest management practices. Fintrac also found that farmers' average annual sales remained at or above pre-graduation levels.

Post-project sustainability in El Salvador is assured because Fintrac taught growers to treat farms as businesses.