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ANNOUNCEMENT



Building economic and trade resilience for entrepreneurs and strengthening agribusiness development in the Pacific

A new partnership between the Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) is set to strengthen the agri-food systems in the Pacific by supporting agribusiness development and transformative partnerships.

Many Pacific countries have a narrow agricultural production base and are particularly vulnerable to external shocks, such as changes in global trade and loss of preferential market access for traditional products. This results in high levels of food imports, lack of agricultural investment and weak producers' and exporters' organisations.

To move from this position of vulnerability and dependence to one of resilience, Pacific island economies must explore new areas of economic development, strengthen their diversification strategies and exploit the interlinkages between sectors such as agriculture, tourism, industry, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and finance.

A robust and innovative agribusiness sector is essential to create economic growth, enhance competitiveness and generate employment and income opportunities that underpin sustainable livelihoods. The private sector has a central role to play in designing and implementing viable local, regional and export food industries that create opportunities in value-added goods and services and strengthen cluster development and multisectoral approaches.

This cannot be achieved at a significant scale without increasing regional productive and trade capacities, easing access to finance and building transformative partnerships.

Achieving this requires interventions in both the public and the private sector. In the public sector, governments must make strategic investments in institutions and infrastructure that will bolster the potential of the agricultural sector and assist with its transformation. The private sector in its turn must strengthen and link the various actors in the agri-food chains, and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and producers' and entrepreneurs' organisations, including those supporting women and youth entrepreneurs.

This is where the partnership between PIPSO and CTA will add value.

The envisaged partnership will start in 2015 with a five year programme that will address strategic areas supporting the Pacific agri-food sector, including policies, value-chain development, ICTs and knowledge management. One of the flagship activities will be an annual joint agribusiness forum, which will bring together key actors in agri-food chains in order to promote exchange of best practices on innovative, inclusive and sustainable models, address exiting gaps in data acquisition and analysis and provide capacity building to key private and public organisations.

While the final R&D topic areas will be decided through the stakeholder process, with an initial workshop in early 2015, possible areas include early warning and weather forecasting for farmers and fishers, index-based insurance and climate-smart practices and approaches.

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About CTA

2014 marks CTA's 30th anniversary. It's an important milestone that allows us to recognise the contribution of our numerous national, regional and international partners. By working together, we've given agricultural and rural communities across African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries the vital skills they need for improving agricultural productivity, sustainability and access to markets. This anniversary also lets us recognise the generous support of our sponsors – the European Union and the ACP Group – over the last three decades.

We've come a long way as an organisation. In fact, helping transform smallholder agriculture into a profitable and sustainable business in the ACP countries has never been as exciting. CTA is working with its partners on a host of issues ranging from getting young people interested in farming to improving access to markets and finance, developing inclusive value chains, enhancing food and nutrition security policies, building resilient agriculture, and harnessing information and communication technologies (ICTs) for the benefit of smallholders.

This is why we've chosen our anniversary theme to be, *'Knowledge is...Transformation, competitiveness, prosperity, resilience and food'* – a positive message about sharing and creating access to research and training. As part of our 2014 celebrations, we have also just published our Stories for Change book. Containing three decades of inspirational tales from around ACP, it demonstrates how the pure power of knowledge changes lives for the better.

For more information visit www.cta.int