

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Successful 'development through organic trade' programme continues

Since 1995 Sida (Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency) has financed a programme to promote exports of organic products from Africa. The latest evaluation made in 2004 showed a high impact and significant improvements in the livelihood of some 27 000 farmers from Uganda and Tanzania. In the end of March Sida decided on a prolongation of the EPOPA programme up to 2008. The total volume of the EPOPA prolongation is 7 Million €.

EPOPA – Export of Organic Products from Africa – aims to give African smallholder farmers a better livelihood through developing local and international organic markets. The increase in agricultural production benefits rural communities, thus the farmers. Thousands of smallholder farmers get a premium price for their organic crop. In general, yields increase because of the better practices. They get a more transparent price setting from the exporter who buys more directly and they are paid cash in hand.

The operation of EPOPA is subcontracted to a consortium of two consultancies; Agro Eco from the Netherlands and Grolink from Sweden.

– Participating countries are given the opportunity to increase and diversify their exports, while at the same time the agricultural sector is exposed to innovative and environmentally sound farming techniques, says Bo van Elzakker, Agro Eco, one of EPOPA's two programme Directors.

– In the prolongation of EPOPA the programme will keep the focus on organic export projects, but there will also be more attention to the development of the organic sector nationally. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, HIV/Aids and the strengthening of small-holders organisation will also get integrated. The programme has also included Zambia in the overall scope, says Gunnar Rundgren, Grolink, one of EPOPA's two programme Directors.

In the latest evaluation made in 2004 it was found that the EPOPA programme increased the farmers' incomes of some 50 percent in general. Today about 30 000 farmers are involved in different EPOPA projects. With an average household size of eight persons this indicates that around 240 000 individuals benefit from EPOPA in Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. With the prolongation even more farmers, food processors and exporters can benefit.

Among the products produced by the farmers, processors and exporters can be mentioned:

Arabica and Robusta coffee beans	Cocoa beans	Instant coffee
Bark cloth	Cotton	Lemon grass
Bourbon Vanilla	Dried pineapple and ginger	Sesame
Candied pineapple and papaya	Essential oils	Shea Nut oil
Canned pineapple	Fresh pineapple, apple bananas, ginger	Nile Perch and Tilapia
Cashew nuts	Honey	

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**At the homepage – [www.epopa.info](http://www.epopa.info) – you can download the full evaluation from 2004**