



SVERIGES AMBASSAD

Embassy of Sweden
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PRESS RELEASE

Swedish Support for Expanding Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa (EPOPA) in Tanzania

Since 1998, Agro Eco has implemented two organic export promotion projects in Tanzania for Sida; organic cocoa from Kyela and organic Robusta coffee from Kagera. As the first phase of the programme was evaluated positively in 2000, Sida decided to extend and expand the EPOPA (Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa) programme. Sweden will extend an amount of SEK 17,5 million corresponding to approximately TSH.1.8 billion during 2002 - 2004. The contract for implementation of the second phase of the EPOPA programme was awarded to a consortium of GroLink and Agro Eco this year. Both Consultancy companies are key actors in the field of organic agriculture and production world-wide.

The project will be presented at the Swedish Embassy on September 19, 2002 at 13.00hrs.

Contrary to common belief, organic agriculture is not only relevant for an ever increasing number of farmers in rich countries, but also for farmers in developing countries. Many of these farmers cannot afford the costs of inputs, and in some areas they practice traditional forms of agriculture that can be converted to organic easily. The EPOPA programme facilitates these conditions into organic farming opening market opportunities for exports. Increased income for farmers in developing countries is a key for development, and that is a main objective of EPOPA. In the projects, exporters work with groups of smallholder, to organise the production for organic certification and to improve quality as well as implement organic techniques. The projects are supported mainly with technical assistance in areas of management, setting up Internal Control Systems (to facilitate organic certification), quality assurance and marketing. Certification costs are initially supported to give the projects a fair chance to develop. Substantial investments in organisation and crop-finance are to be made by the exporter, assuring that only serious and committed companies participate.

The focus of EPOPA is to work on a variety of export oriented projects. At present, an organic Robusta and instant coffee project has been extended from the previous phase of EPOPA. This project works with close to 3500 farmers and is targeted to export of 500 tons of organic certified green coffee beans and 15 tons of instant coffee annually. Another Arabica coffee project involves 4000 farmers and is expected to export 900 tonnes of organic coffee in three years. In the coastal area, 500 farmers are involved in

the production of 400 tonnes of organic hand-shelled Cashew nuts. The programme is looking into increasing the number of projects and diversifying into other crops & products, for example, sugar, honey, condiments, spices, herb teas, fresh vegetables & oils.

Support will also be directed to the institutional development of the organic sector in Tanzania, most notable through the establishment of local organic certification organisations. Tanzania does not have a well-developed organic network. The two other critical factors that the programme will address are little access to relevant information and the development of domestic organic certification. Additionally, EPOPA will start on basic training activities and the introduction of ethical trading standards.

The programme will be operated from a local Agro Eco office in Dar es Salaam.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Marg Leijdens

Email: m.leijdens@agroeco.nl

or

Ewa Hagwall

Private Sector Development

Adviser of the Swedish Embassy

Tl: 22 2111 235