

Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade project calling for expressions of interest

The European Union (EU)-funded Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade (IACT) project (housed at SPC in Fiji) has now hit full stride with a call for expressions of interest from enterprises in Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste. The project invites enterprises such as private businesses, associations, councils and non-governmental organisations to apply for assistance in improving and diversifying agricultural exports. There is also scope for projects that focus on commodities that will aid in import substitution.

Apart from agriculture, IACT also includes aquaculture and mariculture commodities. The project aims to assist existing aquaculture businesses or producer groups to overcome production constraints, technical capacity, and assessment of market potential through market studies, value chain analyses, food safety certification, and labelling. In addition, projects that develop cluster groups that allow smaller producers to pool together for better economies of scale will be encouraged. This EU-funded project brings closer coordination between two SPC divisions: the Land Resources Division and Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division.

IACT will work on a problem-solving approach whereby enterprises that wish to expand or improve their consistency in supply, market access, quality control and efficiency can request specific interventions. The closing date for the 1st phase of expressions of interest was 20 April 2012. However, more opportunities will arise over the next three years.

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Farms such as the milkfish farm above in Timor-Leste stand to gain from IACT interventions (Image: Avinash Singh).