

CALL FOR PAPERS AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

Inclusive Agro-Enterprise Development

A Joint FAO/Cornell University – IAAE Pre-Conference Symposium

28th Conference of the International Association of Agricultural Economists

Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, August 18-24, 2012

Background

In collaboration with the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Cornell International Institute for Food Agriculture and Development (CIIFAD) will host an international symposium on “**Inclusive Agro-Enterprise Development**”, as part of the technical program of IAAE’s Triennial Conference of 2012.

Agro-enterprises make important contributions to employment and income generation in developing countries. They have key roles in the production, processing and distribution of food and fiber and are central actors in developing sustainable agricultural value chains. The economic performance of agro-enterprises - firm growth, profits, and market share - in no small measure depends on the environment in which they operate. In most developing countries, agro-enterprises and in particular small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs) face critical gaps in their day to day operations in terms of capacities, infrastructure, finance, market services, access to suitable and affordable technologies, and other requirements that need to be met in order for them to be viable and reliable chain partners. Yet, developing countries SMAEs account for a large and growing share of agricultural sector value addition and employment in developing regions.

To address these challenges, many countries have experimented, tested and implemented innovative approaches for promoting investments, technologies, and attracting capital aimed at engendering the development of agro-enterprises at all levels. They have also implemented risk management mechanisms to enhance the economic welfare of vulnerable actors in the agro-food system. These cases offer lessons that could be usefully adopted by other countries. Accordingly, this joint FAO-Cornell symposium will identify policies, tools and approaches that have been successful in facilitating inclusive development of agro-enterprises, with specific attention to tried and tested examples from developing countries. Beyond identifying the emerging lessons and best practices for development professionals, the symposium will highlight concern for the distributional consequences of global and domestic capital and technology flows and will underscore the need for institutional innovations in markets that can better manage risk and improve access to appropriate support services for agro-enterprises.

Objectives

The symposium aims to bring together leading scholars, government officials, private sector representatives and development practitioners to discuss innovative approaches to promote inclusive agro-enterprise development. The goal is to offer a platform whereby novel international experiences in agro-enterprise development policies and support institutions can be discussed, lessons can be learned and recommendations can be made to improve the effectiveness of agro-enterprise investment promotion

initiatives by governments and development organizations. Areas of special interest for discussion include:

- Business models linking producers and buyers
- Agro-industry clusters, agribusiness incubators and agro-food parks
 - o Agro-based growth corridors and special economic zones
 - o Technical and financial support for small and medium enterprises
 - o Collective action and producer associations/ cooperatives
 - o Risk management approaches and tools for small-holders
 - o Pro-poor investment promotion policies and mechanisms
 - o Incentives for micro and missing-middle investors
 - o Infrastructure investments to enhance market integration

Potential contributors to the symposium should send a proposal consisting of an extended abstract (250 – 400 words) and a brief resume to Carlos.DaSilva@fao.org

Grants

Professionals from developing countries who have their contributions accepted for presentation at the symposium are eligible to a grant of a maximum of US\$2,500 (two thousand and five hundred dollars), to help defray their costs of participation in the IAAE event. The grants will be provided to a number of selected participants, upon submission of a technical paper to be prepared in accordance with FAO guidelines, to be later communicated to authors. The selected papers and a synthesis of the symposium discussions and deliberations will be published as a joint FAO – Cornell University book.

Authors from non-eligible countries with own funding for participation are also welcome to submit their contributions.

Important Dates

- Submission of an extended abstract (max 400 words): **February 28th 2012**
- Communication of acceptance and grant eligibility: **March 31st, 2012**
- Submission of the full paper (max 10000 words): **June 30th 2012**
- Pre-Conference Symposium: **August 18th, 2012**