

Climate Smart Agriculture Research and Innovation Support for Dairy Value Chains in Eritrea

Funded under the EU Development-smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture Initiative (DeSIRA)

The EU Office in Eritrea has confirmed funding of €4 million over a 50 month period commencing on 3rd February 2020 for a Teagasc-led project in Eritrea entitled: **Climate Smart Agriculture Research and Innovation Support for Dairy Value Chains in Eritrea**. Teagasc will partner with the Ministry of Agriculture in Eritrea, the country's National Agriculture Research Institute, extension service, agricultural university (Hamelmallo College) and various private sector organisations, as well as UCC, UCD ,Vita, SHA and LUKE (Finland). We will also link in with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).

The DeSIRA initiative aims to:

- Foster innovation in agriculture in countries and regions by generating scientific knowledge and innovations that will encompass agronomy for primary production and within landscapes, technology for all steps of processing, and economy, social affairs and general organisation along the value chains, and focussing on major activities to reduce poverty and vulnerability, support job creation, and food and nutrition security;
- Develop research architecture and enhance national and regional research capacities to be more efficient and conducive to innovation;
- Increase knowledge and evidence to feed development policies and investment decisions.

In accordance with the objectives and main themes of the DeSIRA call, the Teagasc project in is founded on the need to bring about an inclusive, sustainable and climate-relevant transformation of the Eritrean dairy value chain to enhance food and nutrition security, reduce poverty, create job opportunities for young people, and address other key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In accordance with the main themes of DeSIRA, the proposal aims to accelerate access to innovation in the Eritrean dairy sector, encompassing the development and transfer of technologies for primary milk production, for all stages of dairy processing and for the more efficient and effective organisation of the full value chain. In addition, the proposal aims to support the strengthening of the national and regional research and knowledge transfer capacities conducive to innovation and adding to the store of knowledge and evidence to feed development policies.

The opportunity for employment, and especially youth employment, all along the value chain will form an integral part of the programme, as will the objective of integrating gender mainstreaming into the project activities.

The proposal aims to create a multi-stakeholder partnerships involving the EU, Member States, global research institutes and local Eritrean stakeholders involved in the promotion of Agricultural Knowledge Innovation System (AKIS) that will empower smallholder dairy farmers, facilitate private sector investment along the dairy value chain, strengthen human and institutional resources of the public research and extension services to accelerate the impact of innovation at scale, particularly in the context of the severe climate change impacts expected in Eritrea.

It is proposed that the project will support the development of improved, competitive, sustainable, climate smart and equitable value chains for dairy commodities in three Zobas (Debub, Maekel and Anseba). The focus will be on the whole dairy value chain from farm to market. A major focus will be on the orientation of key actors in the value chain to market requirements and to the use of climate smart production and value-added initiatives. The target groups will be all the actors along the value chain, with a new emphasis of involving the private sector. These include:

1. resource-poor livestock farmers;
2. private and cooperative input and output market agents and service suppliers, including milk collection and processing entities, as well as AI and veterinary services;
3. small scale entrepreneurs (e.g. National Union of Eritrean Women) and
4. public-sector bodies including the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI), Hamelmalo Agricultural College (HAC), MoA, and regional governments (Zobas).

In addition, the project will impact the following final beneficiaries:

1. unemployed youth who will benefit from additional employment opportunities flowing from a more productive farming sector and stronger overall value chain;
2. consumers of the new high-value dairy products who will enjoy greater availability of more cost-effective, quality products; and
3. national economy which will benefit from increased employment, additional food exports and reduced food imports.

The project is structured in six inter-related work packages (WPs) as illustrated in Figure 1. These work packages give a summary of the main activities and institutional responsibilities.

Figure 1: Work Packages

