

EU Launches Phase II Of PIP In Cameroon

By JOSEPH ROLAND DJOTIE IN DOUALA

THE European Development Fund, through the COLEAPC, the Liaison Committee for Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries last



PIP Policy Adviser, Morag Webb centre to left, Samuel Tagni Tepie, Reg Del of MINADER

Wednesday July 13 at the Sawa Hotel in Douala, Cameroon, organised a workshop to launch the 2nd Phase of the PIP programme.

The COLEAPC defends the interests of the ACP exporters/producers and the EU importers of fruits, vegetables, flowers and plants. The project, The SUN gathered, was conceived to help producers and exporters of fruits and fresh vegetables of the ACP countries overcome the difficulties encountered in entering the European market caused by the harmonisation of the European regulations and by growing exigencies of bigger distribution.

With the success of the PIP Phase I which helped the Africa-Caribbean and Pacific operators of the horticultural industry face the challenge of Sanitation Quality (pesticides, traceability, etc), the ACP Secretariat demanded a Phase II of the PIP programme that was launched in October 2009. Its objectives, Morag Webb, PIP Policy Adviser said, "are to

provide exporters and producers of the ACP with the necessary support which will permit them respond to the general conditions imposed by their customers in order to enter the European market".

The conditions in question involve sanitary quality, the respect of the environment; social ethics, sustainable development... and all these have to be mastered by producers and exporters of the horticultural sector in Cameroon.

How to Benefit from the PIP

During the workshop, about 40 producers and exporters of fruits and vegetables in Cameroon were sufficiently enlightened on the new challenges awaiting them in the European market.

This was done by the PIP team led by Benedicte Werner, PIP's Head of Capacity Building. But the most important module of the training workshop dealt with how to benefit from the financial and technical support of the programme. Talking to participants, the COLEAPC officials in charge of the PIP explained that the PIP support concerns the whole ACP network, from t producers to exporters, passing through all the private and public service providers (consultants, professional associations, support structures to small producers, training centres, certification bodies...).

The commitment of the beneficiary and his/her appropriation of the action, which are key factors of the success of the Phase I programme, begins by an application for support built by the operator in accordance with his/her objectives.

To help operators of the horticultural industry structure their application of

support, the PIP has put at their disposal some models which vary according to the nature of the organisation. Going by documents handed to the press, they indicate files shall be "analysed in the best deadlines by a technical official of the programme execution unit that will become, from that moment, your speaker. And in that case, he will propose, in the eligibility limit of your requests, an agreement protocol between the PIP and your organisation".

Progress

By 2009, PIP provided support in 28 ACP countries covering 80 percent of produce exported from the ACP to EU countries. Local service providers trained by PIP had largely (80 percent) replaced EU expertise in the delivery of technical assistance to producers and exporters.

The PIP programme is present in West, Central and East Africa and the Caribbeans. In Cameroon, The SUN gathered, 24 companies and support structures benefitted from the programme. According to the European Union, the considerable progress made in improving horticultural production for export should also benefit and be a factor in the modernisation of horticulture production for the African market.

The dissemination of knowledge and skills on aspects such as good agricultural practices and food safety will therefore be a priority. For the last eight years, 2001-2009, the EU has invested 38.2 millions Euros about FCFA 25 billion in the PIP programme and is very satisfied by its positive results. In recognition of all this, and to help ACP countries access to EU markets, PIP has been granted a second phase that will run from 2009-2014. The total cost of this Phase 2 is 32 millions Euros according to Morag Webb, PIP's Policy Adviser.