



MEDIA RELEASE

Fiji Government receives equipment through EU-SPC Improvement of Key Services to Agriculture Project

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For Immediate Release

Suva, Fiji – The Director-General of the Pacific Community (SPC), Dr Colin Tukuitonga and the European Union (EU) Ambassador to Fiji and the Pacific, H.E Andrew Jacobs today handed over equipment valued at approximately F\$300,000 to the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of the SPC-EU “Improving Key Services to Agriculture” (IKSA) project.

The assets were part of the IKSA programme, one of several projects implemented by SPC and financed by the EU to assist farmers and communities in Fiji’s sugarcane belt. These projects are linked to the EU’s Accompanying Measures for the Sugar Protocol (AMSP) programme, designed to support a diversified market-driven agriculture, promote alternative livelihoods and income generating activities for the most affected populations and alleviate risks to natural disasters.

In handing over the assets, Ambassador Jacobs said, “The assets which we are handing over today to the Ministry of Agriculture will strengthen the extension services to farmers and farming communities in Fiji’s sugarcane belt. This project has supported the production and trading of horticulture crops. It has therefore also contributed to substituting the import of fruits and vegetables. Entrusting the assets to Fiji’s institution responsible for this sector will ensure that these activities will continue to the benefit of vulnerable communities in Fiji.”

The Pacific Community’s Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga said, "The IKSA project has been working with farmers to develop their horticultural production in communities that traditionally have a high income dependence upon the production and harvesting of sugarcane. We hope that the vehicles and other assets being handed over today will assist the Ministry of Agriculture to sustain their key services in community and farmer development and to continue growing the horticultural market and creating new income streams.”

The IKSA project has been working to improve and enhance agricultural services to allow sugar cane farmers to increase on-farm incomes by enhancing their supply capacities through assisting with access to seed, seedlings and farm inputs, provision of practical training through farm demonstration plots and communications, and linkages to markets. The IKSA project will run for a further one year and is working closely with the Fiji Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, to strengthen research and extension services and to enhance support services to farmers in Fiji's sugarcane belt area to cushion the economic and social impacts of the restructuring of the sugar industry. [ENDS]

Background

IKSA is one of several projects implemented by SPC and financed by the EU in Fiji's sugarcane belt. These projects are linked to the EU's Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol (AMSP) programme and aim to help strengthen rural sugar-income dependent communities in response to the EU's Sugar Price Reform and the adverse conditions in the sugar industry. The AMSP programme is designed to improve the livelihoods of sugarcane dependent populations, increase income and reduce poverty.

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ABOUT US

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, proudly supporting development since 1947. It is an international development organisation owned and governed by its 26 countries and territory members.