



Term of Reference: Short Term Adviser (STA) - local/national

Technical expert on konjac farming and processing

Reports to: Arsenio Borromeu, Business Adviser

Duration: Up to 18 days

Locations: Dili, Aileu, Ainaro, Ermera, Liquica

About the Market Development Facility

Market Development Facility (MDF) is an Australian Government funded multi-country initiative which promotes sustainable economic development, through higher incomes for women and men, in our partner countries. MDF is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT). It is implemented by Palladium in partnership with Swisscontact. MDF two priority sectors in Timor-Leste are agriculture and tourism, with some activities in other sectors such as manufacturing.

Background

Global demand for konjac flour is strong and growing, with highest demand coming from China and Japan. Over the past three years, there have been significant increases in exports from Timor-Leste, largely to China. Official statistics recorded 1,669 MT of dried konjac chips was exported in 2018, up from 568 MT in 2017 and 20 MT in 2016.

Konjac is suitable for many Timorese farmers. Few inputs are required apart from seed, and limited maintenance is required. It also grows best in shady conditions, much like coffee. However, the konjac industry in Timor-Leste is rudimentary at present, being based mainly on collection rather than deliberate cultivation.

Objective

The objective of the assignment is to support konjac cultivation and processing by coffee companies and coffee farmers.

Key Responsibilities

The technical expert will support the objective by delivering training to, and provide advice on konjac farming and processing of dried konjac chips, to at least nine coffee companies and respective farmer groups within the municipalities of Aileu, Ainaro, Ermera, and Liquica.

Specific responsibilities will include:



1. Working with MDF to update written training materials on konjac farming and processing. This will include: (i) plant identification, (ii) konjac seed collection, classification, utilisation, and storage, (iii) land preparation, (iv) planting intercropping methods, (v) konjac corm maturity and harvest, and (vi) cutting and drying konjac.
2. Assisting MDF to develop a training schedule and training plan.
3. Travelling to locations agreed by coffee companies and MDF to deliver trainings to staff of coffee companies and selected farmers.
4. Preparing a final report on all trainings completed. The report must include: (i) topics covered in the trainings, (ii) a timesheet of inputs, (iii) participant attendance list (sex-disaggregated), (iv) feedback from training participants (both company staff and farmers); and (v) general feedback and recommendations for future work from the technical expert.

Duration and Location

The technical expert will be required to provide up to eighteen (18) days of inputs. The actual number of days may be less, subject to direction of MDF. Input days are likely to be split (not continuous) and subject to negotiation with MDF. Aside from limited preparation work in Dili, most time inputs of the expert will be spent delivering training at locations specified by coffee companies and MDF across four municipalities: Aileu, Ainaro, Ermera and Liquica. MDF will arrange and provide transport, accommodation and pre diems.

Required Selection Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Strong knowledge and experience of konjac farming and processing
2. Experience training farmers
3. Be based in Timor-Leste
4. Ability and willingness to travel and work in remote, rural areas
5. Good written and verbal communications skills in Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia, or the support of your own translator.

To Apply

Please submit a brief written application (no more than two pages) responding to the Selection Criteria via email to judith.lopes-MDF@thepalladiumgroup.com before 5pm (Dili time) on 6 April 2020.