

Submission to: Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus)  
From: Mr Rod Miller, Executive Director (Acting) Rural Solutions SA.  
Date: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

## **Background**

Rural Solutions SA is a Government owned consultancy business focussed on sustainable primary industry development (agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and mining sectors), within culturally and environmentally responsible approaches. Rural Solutions SA has in excess of 200 professionally qualified consultants and support staff, who operate on a significant range of projects nationally and internationally. Detailed information in relation to Rural Solutions SA can be found at [www.ruralsolutions.sa.gov.au](http://www.ruralsolutions.sa.gov.au)

As an internationally recognised provider of primary industry, community and environmental services, Rural Solutions SA welcomes the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) new trade and economic agreement referred to as PACER Plus. We support initiatives associated with the PACER agreement, such as the building and strengthening of trade capacity building and trade development assistance to Pacific Island member countries, in an effort to promote sustainable economic development in this very important region.

## **Our International Experience**

Rural Solutions SA believe that we can offer significant contributions to the development and support of economic development and relationships to DFAT's PACER Plus program, the result of a range of programs that we have recently, or are currently delivering to many overseas countries. Briefly, we wish to share with you some of our activities, which we consider offer an ideal approach to supporting a number of key outcomes associated with the proposed PACER Plus program. These are provided as attachments to this submission. There are many other examples of our work that can be viewed on our web site, covering natural resource management, fisheries and aquaculture industries, working across a wide range of rural and indigenous community stakeholders; from developing the Russian beef industry on deserted communes through to introducing conservation farming systems to subsistence farmers in Eritrea.

Our approach is one of capacity building and enhancing the skills, confidence and abilities of those we work with in developing countries. Our project development and delivery activities have clear achievable outcomes, providing a focussed direction for the people that we work alongside. We offer high degrees of innovativeness, utilising the existing skills of the professionals that we work with from targeted countries and organisations, in what can only be described as true partnerships, focussed on building capabilities and capacity at all organisational levels. Our work is funded by overseas Governments, consortiums and private companies, in addition to Federal Government agencies such as ACIAR, AusAID, and DAF's International Division (Market Access).

We look forward to assisting PACER Plus in the future, be it refining program approaches and methodologies, or providing expressions of interest in particular project activities. Please contact me should our team be of further assistance to you,



Rod Miller  
Acting Executive Director, Rural Solutions SA

## **International Project Work Examples undertaken by Rural Solutions SA**

### **Developing Livestock Pastoral Industries in Niger, Africa**

The project will assist the Niger Government to increase the supply of quality livestock to a newly constructed abattoir, through improved livestock management, pasture and fodder species introduction, livestock production and pasture species systems modeling. This will be supported through market chain development and enhanced farmer adoption of 'best practice'. A strong emphasis will be placed upon local capacity building of Ministry livestock and extension staff, who will coordinate many of the on-the-ground outputs from the project.

### **Developing an efficient and effective Citrus Industry in Indonesia**

The aim of the project was to develop a market & supply chain for Kaprok (citrus variety) in Indonesia.

The approach adopted was to work back from the market place along the value chain to ensure that the product matched market requirements. Significant effort was spent in market analysis and development, with project approaches including value chain analysis and post harvest technical analysis and analysis of the infrastructure.

### **Smallholder Commercial Pig Production in NTT, Indonesia**

The aim of the project was to analyse the supply chains in Kupang (Indonesia) in the pig meat industry and develop some innovative solutions to problems identified. A market assessment through locally based research and analysis of value chains was conducted thereby building capacity through identifying opportunities. In addition, on farm agronomic experimentation through research and demonstrations was conducted as well as a training needs assessment and the provision of participatory based training to key personnel. This resulted in the development and adoption of an integrated pig meat supply chain to replace a fragmented inefficient series of processes and significant market capacity building through information supply, improved infrastructure and education.

### **Short Course Technical Training for Iraqi Agricultural Scientists**

The aim is to design and deliver a range of short courses aimed at developing the technical of Iraqi agricultural scientists. These are being conducted in both Australia and Syria. The courses aim to enhance the skills and capabilities of scientists, improved understanding of agricultural systems development, improved project management and the ability to introduce change into Iraqi agricultural systems. The training has a strong emphasis upon modernizing farming systems in Iraq, development of problem-solving processes, utilising modern adult learning and experiential learning approaches.

### **Identifying the motivational characteristics of young agricultural professionals in developing countries**

This project sets out to identify how young agricultural professionals can be better supported in agricultural organisations in a range of developing countries. The research is taking place by way of individual interviews and case studies, utilising a grounded theory approach to the research. The project targets young professionals from a range of agricultural organisations in Eritrea, Iraq, India and China (Tibet Autonomous Region). The project aims to develop improved systems of managing young professionals, through understanding their psychological characteristics and determinants of motivation. Whilst some of the issues associated with organisational management may not be able to be changed, the project will highlight some of the governance issues and challenges from a broader perspective that require longer term changes and attention.

### **Strategic Planning and Educational Development for Hamelmalo Agricultural College, Eritrea**

The project aims to provide strategic planning and educational guidance and advice to the Hamelmalo Agricultural College, located in Eritrea, eastern Africa. This is achieved through providing a range of specialist workshops, needs analysis activities, situational analysis, curriculum planning and review, strategic planning workshops and staff mentoring and support. The project aims to build the skills and abilities of graduates of the College to undertake commercial agricultural enterprises, underpinned by sound business planning and market assessment criteria.