



# BARINU INSTITUTE

FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*In Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

## **Barinu Institute Agriculture -Renaissance Project (Sierra Leone) -Concept**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Barinu Institute for Economic Development (BIFED) is a global educational institution and a project based nongovernmental organization registered in the state of Colorado in the United States with a global focus and a commitment to eliminating extreme poverty in the world.

BIFED is seeking to assist in developing an integrated agricultural value-chain project through the formation of producer cluster cooperatives and trader networks and associations in the country of Sierra Leone, which in 2008 was ranked the seventh poorest country in the world with the lowest aggregate score on the human development index.

A brutal civil war was fought from 1991 to 2002 where tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans were killed and maimed and agriculture became almost non-existent as rural farmers flooded into the main cities, fleeing the fighting. Experts say Sierra Leone has the resources in terms of arable land, water and climate to again develop into an agricultural exporter and to attain food security for its citizens now that peace once again reigns.

The government of Sierra Leone and its partners has made great strides since 2002; meeting most of the production and stock increases laid out in the PRSP for agriculture produce and livestock as well as mostly meeting their obligations under the Maputo Declaration for the Development of the Agriculture Sector in Africa, which states that, African Governments should allocate at least 10% of their National budget to the agriculture sector. This has been achieved through meeting and surpassing the production target increases as well as expanding ICT coverage for information dissemination and the development and maintenance of Primary, Secondary and Feeder roads for the greater ease of transporting produce to markets.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Agriculture-Renaissance Project is an integrated agricultural project that seeks to enhance ongoing agriculture food security and export activities in Sierra Leone as laid out in governments Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) and the Medium-Term Agricultural Strategic Plan as well as the National Food and Energy Policy and the PRSP. The government has developed several strategies to this end, such as the Youth Empowerment Scheme, which BIED plans to focus its efforts. BIFED plans to use its expert capacity in the field of business, marketing and cooperative development, information technology, agriculture extension, social capital formation and indigenous knowledge methodology to create a favorable climate for agriculture productivity in Sierra Leone.

The targeted beneficiaries for the production side of the project will be resettled youth being trained in government and donor financed micro-farms, as well as women farmers in urban outlying areas who grow the bulk of fresh produce for the city markets, ex-combatants participating in reintegration programs in the east of the country where the main commercial crops of rice, coffee and cocoa are grown and general farmers who already contribute the bulk of agriculture production in the country from their small-holdings. BIFED will work closely with the structures of the Included in this matrix of beneficiaries will be the fragmented small traders in the informal economy who in aggregate, move a large amount of the farmers produce.

The targeted beneficiaries will be encouraged and supported by BIFED to form cooperatives/associations around producer run demonstration or 'China' farms within the cluster of their own fields which will serve as best practice demonstration areas and seed banks for the cooperative members as well as some income for the running of the associations. These cooperatives will assist in disseminating best farming practices and general information flows on crop harvest amounts, promotion and opportunities, organize produce for collective marketing in bulk, and enhance bargaining power and joint economical access for inputs, transport and finance as well as future investments in processing and value addition opportunities. Targeted groups like the youth will be promoted for receiving tenure of inland valley swamp land and riverine properties, where clusters can be formed. BIFED will collaborate with the National Association of Farmers of Sierra Leone (NAFSL) in order to develop this model and organize membership under such an umbrella body.

Much of the extension information and research will originate from existing facilities such as Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) and Njala University, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) and the Ministry of Trade & Industry; these institutions will be given the needed back-stopping and support from BIFED in order to transfer and enhance their existing knowledge base.

Furthermore, the support and development BIFED will be giving to informal traders associations will enhance local market information and efficiency to the ends of greater food security for all of Sierra Leone. BIFED will also assist in develop working linkages between the traders and producers through innovative ICT measures, micro-finance opportunities, economical transport networks and market based research which will create a synergistic bond of need between the poles of the value chain in order to meet demand.

BIFED will also develop and disseminate in various formats a consumer oriented promotional campaign for substitute staple crops such as cassava and cocoyam which will have the two-fold effect of developing new internal markets and diversification of crops for producers, as well as eventually saving the government from expending precious foreign reserves to import staples for shortfalls of rice in domestic production.

### **PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS and KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- ✓ The success of the Agriculture-Renaissance Project will depend on the continued adherence of the government of Sierra Leone to its commitments under the 2nd pillar of the PRSP; promoting food security and job creation, investment in supportive Infrastructure and improving the climate for private sector development.
- ✓ BIFED will need to carry out a three month pre-project assessment in order to insure the proposed Agriculture-Renaissance Project will go as planned or needs to be modified in order to fit into the current realities on the ground for all stakeholders and beneficiaries involved. BIFED will also need to develop the internal procedures, budget, processes and protocols, landmarks and goals as well as the monitoring and evaluation facilities needed to run the project successfully. This planning process is envisioned to take three months in country and contain a stakeholder's workshop to gain consensus for the project and its beneficiaries.
- ✓ Once the project is developed BIFED will develop the time frame and budget for the project. The initial phase of the Agriculture-Renaissance Project is envisioned