



EUROPEAN COMMISSION – PRESS RELEASE

The EU supports the recovery of the sugar sector in Zimbabwe

Brussels 22/11/2012 - Today, the European Union agreed to fund a programme to support the recovery of the sugar sector of Zimbabwe. This initiative forms part of the European Commission's programme of Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries for 2011-2013.

"The Zimbabwe Sugar Industry is of strategic importance to the country's economy which is re-emerging from a drastic decline that culminated in 2008, when sugar production fell below 300,000 tons per year. This project aims at restoring the capacity and the level of production of the sugar industry, on which the livelihood of more than 200,000 people depends. The EU funds will also contribute to the implementation of the national land audit programme, which is crucially needed to ensure a proper framework for increasing the productivity of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector," said Aldo Dell'Araccia, Head of the EU Delegation to Zimbabwe.

Background

In 2006, the Government of Zimbabwe approved a National Sugar Adaptation Strategy (NSAS) to adjust to the new EU sugar market regime and future changes. The European Commission allocated €23 million to support this strategy over the period 2007-2010, and another €8.4 million for the period 2011-2013.

The NSAS identifies the following priorities:

- Stop the decline in production levels of sugar in the short term.
- Rejuvenate existing cane production areas to boost cane production and restore the industry to its former level of >600,000 tonnes of sugar per year in the short to medium term.

The response strategy channels support to smallholder outgrowers, the most vulnerable stakeholders of the industry, whose cane input to the mills has greatly declined over the past years. The strategy pursues as its ultimate objective the restoration of the livelihoods of these smallholders.

The EU programme complements the efforts of the Zimbabwean sugar industry to increase cane production. The combined efforts contribute to restoring the production of sugar close to pre-crisis levels.

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**For more information**

Website of the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Website of the European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm