

## RITA, the agricultural innovation and dissemination networks



« A network gathering the stakeholders of agricultural development in the French outermost Regions »

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### **What are the RITA?**

In a given territory, the local RITA gather actors belonging to research, agricultural development (Chambers of Agriculture, technical institutes), professional organizations, the services of the State and the local managing authorities. Together, they identify and select research, development and innovation projects consistent with the needs of farmers and of the territory as a whole. They also take part in the monitoring of the implementation of the actions.

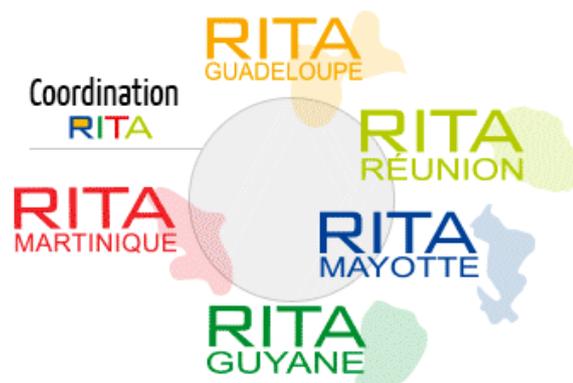
There is a RITA for each French outermost region<sup>1</sup>. All 5 RITA are closely intertwined as regards collaboration between the 5 regions.

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### **From partnership consultation to transfer effectiveness**

In the course of a collaborative innovation process, Technical Institutes are responsible for bridging the gap between research and the production sector: experimentation, validation, change of scale and applications. In each outermost Region, a RITA facilitator coordinates the scheme.

At national level, ACTA and CIRAD coordinate the RITA: in particular, they are in charge of the "transfer/replication" dimensions within each Outermost Region as well as between the five French Outermost Regions. Transfer and operational uptake is key for the implementation of innovation and the success of the Overall RITA scheme.



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### **Involvement of professional agricultural organizations**

The stakeholders of agricultural development are expected to work in a coordinated manner, so as to favor the identification and ranking of the needs of the farming sector. The goal is to collectively achieve experiments, demos, and dissemination activities, relying on the complementary skills and know-how of each partner. Particular attention is also paid to knowledge exchange and cross-fertilization among Outermost Regions.

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### **Core principles**

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<sup>1</sup> Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana in the Caribbean. La Réunion and Mayotte in the Indian Ocean.

The RITA network is mainly geared at implementing multi-partnership projects responding to the needs of farmers: using the outputs of research and valuing the previous works, up to the collective definition of new research priorities. The ultimate goal of the RITA is to transfer and disseminate the outcomes of the projects at farm level, in line with the principles of agro-ecology.

### **Some practicalities....**

1. For crop diversification in Guadeloupe, the EVA Transfer project involves five actors of the Research, development and innovation chain (CIRAD, INRA, IT2, Chamber of Agriculture and ASSOFWI). The objective of EVA Transfer is to evaluate and to transfer varietal and cropping systems innovations for a diversified and sustainable agriculture:

- Introduction of sanitizing plant in orchards in order to reduce the use of chemicals.
- Eradication of "Citrus greening" infected trees and introduction of disease resistant varieties.

2. As for animal productions, the Technical Institute IKARE (together with the livestock professionals) leads the "SysFou" (Forage Systems) project: new silage techniques are introduced in Martinique. This allowed farmers who adopted this innovation to overcome the serious drought that took place in 2014, by securing feeds stocks.



JP Aurore, cattle farmer, La Martinique © Cirad



Black fly pollinating tomato flowers © Armefflor

3. In La Reunion, the Technical Institute ARHMEFLOR, along with CIRAD and front-runners farmers specialized in green houses tomato farming, has developed a new pollination technique. A certain local black fly is acclimatized to live in green houses in order to fulfill the role of pollinator of tomato plants thanks to its vibratory skills. This outstanding innovation allows saving huge amounts of labor:

pollination was previously carried out by hand. Production costs of tomatoes have dramatically dropped.

4. In French Guyana, David Yang, a pineapple grower, is able to decrease the losses incurred by



Infected pineapple © Chambagri 973

insect bites by 90% thanks to the use of special type of net. This practical innovation was developed collectively by the local RITA stakeholders.



Nets over the plantation © Chambagri 973

### **Links:**

<http://coatis.rita-dom.fr/wakka.php?wiki=HomePage>

### **Contacts**

ACTA: [philippe.prigent@acta.asso.fr](mailto:philippe.prigent@acta.asso.fr)

CIRAD: [jean-marc.thevenin@cirad.fr](mailto:jean-marc.thevenin@cirad.fr)