



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 04 September 2017

ICCO Cooperation, East West Seed, Network Activities Group and the DaNa Facility Launch the 'Pulses, People, Planet and Profit' Project

Yangon, Monday, 04 September 2017 – ICCO Cooperation and the DaNa Facility, in collaboration with East West Seed and Network Activities Group, have launched a 30-month UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded project to increase the incomes of 10,000 smallholder mungbean farmers, 20% of whom are landless female farm labourers. The project is co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Pulses value chains, specifically for mungbeans, offer great potential to lift many Myanmar farmers and labourers out of poverty. The 'Pulses, People, Planet and Profit' (P4) project will work with smallholder mungbean farmers and labourers in four townships in the Yangon and Magway Regions. The P4 project aims to: (a) improve the enabling environment for the mungbean value chain in Myanmar by proposing policy and regulatory reforms; (b) increase the volume of mungbeans purchased by premium market buyers from farmers' groups by enhancing access to support services on Good Agricultural Practices, Climate Smart Agriculture and collective marketing; and (c) increase productivity and quality of produce by enhancing access to support services and good quality mungbean seeds.

Pulses and beans in Myanmar account for over 20% of total cultivated area and fit well with rice-based cropping systems in the Delta and diversified production systems in the Dry Zone. "The largest amount of Myanmar's pulses and beans is exported to India and China. However there are huge market opportunities in Europe, Japan and other high-premium markets, where the mungbean sprouts are eaten. Hence farming and post-harvest practices which influence taste, safety and quality are very important", said Mr. Khin Zaw Tun, ICCO Cooperation's project manager for the P4 project. "Despite these market opportunities, many mungbean farmers remain poor, due to low productivity and inconsistent quality of produce. Therefore, the ICCO consortium will organize the farmers and train them, the labourers and their service providers on Good Agricultural Practices and the importance of using good quality mungbean seeds. Producers and exporters will then be able to supply premium product segments and markets, such as beans for sprouting and cooking in Europe, Japan, Taiwan and other South East Asian markets. This will diversify the Myanmar mungbean sector beyond Indian and Chinese markets and also tap opportunities to fulfil the upper market segments in these two countries".

According to Kees de Ruiter, the Regional Manager of ICCO Cooperation South East Asia: "By using our Markets for the Poor approach, ICCO Cooperation addresses issues throughout the value chain, including through strengthening the role of the private sector. For our new project in Myanmar, we are very happy to collaborate with East West Seed, and several buyers and other private sector players to solve the challenges in the mungbean value chain".

"From the DaNa Facility perspective, we are delighted to support ICCO Cooperation's well formulated project to create increased jobs and incomes among poor mungbean farmers," said Peter Brimble, Team Leader of the DaNa Facility. "We welcome the strong engagement with the private sector and the focus on commercial viability and sustainability"

About ICCO Cooperation: ICCO Cooperation is a Dutch organization with 51 years of experience and a global presence through five regional offices. The regional office in South East Asia implements projects and programs in Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam. Together with our partners from the public and private sector, ICCO works towards a just and dignified life for all, by promoting opportunities for economic empowerment and inclusive development.

About East West Seed: With over 10 years of experience in Myanmar and a distribution network covering most of the country, East West Seed became the first international vegetable seed company to establish as a fully registered and legal Myanmar entity in 2016. This enables East West Seed to undertake research and development, produce, import and export, and trade in open-pollinated and hybrid vegetable seeds. The company also supports pre-commercial knowledge transfer activities for smallholder farmers.

About Network Activities Group: Network Activities Group is working for the poor and vulnerable as well as for the communities in the rural areas of Myanmar to have them sustainable natural resources and food security, development of livelihoods that are appropriate and favourable with their geographical context, good access to the market opportunities in efficient market chains, proper access to their citizen rights and authority through empowered community-based and regionally based civil society organizations in their own community.

About the DaNa Facility: The DaNa Facility is a UK Department for International Development (DFID) funded 4.5-year programme, established in May 2016 as one of three components of DFID's wider 'Business for Shared Prosperity' (BSP) programme. The DaNa Facility, implemented by DAI Europe and KPMG, supports inclusive economic growth and private sector development in Myanmar through responsible and sustainable business growth, investment and trade.