



## PRESS RELEASE

**Kick-off meeting of the European FoodSTEM project:** "Training a new generation of entrepreneurs in sustainable agriculture and food processing"

(20-23/01/2020)

and

**FoodSTEM Stakeholder Workshop**

22/01/2020

With a total duration of 3 years, FoodSTEM is a new capacity-building project for 4 Cambodian universities which aims at developing courses and providing new technical facilities to cover the training needs linked to the development of a sustainable agriculture and food industry in Cambodia.

As a matter of fact, the Cambodian food market consists mainly of products imported from neighboring countries. Locally, food processing is carried out by informal family microenterprises lacking entrepreneurial skills and access to finance, with inadequate infrastructure and limited concerns in terms of quality, safety or respect for the environment. Hence the need to strengthen training at different university levels, from the technician level to the master level in order to allow the emergence of a new generation of innovative and fully qualified entrepreneurs.

FoodSTEM has a multidisciplinary and innovative approach both through the content offered which includes entrepreneurship, product design, supply chain, food security and through learning methods: e-learning, manufacturing workshops open to students ,...

The Cambodian partner universities of the project are the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC), coordinator of the project, the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) and the University of Battambang (UBB).

With the support of French and Belgian universities (Institut National Polytechnique de Toulouse, Montpellier Supagro, Université de Liège), online courses will be developed and incorporated into the programs of the 4 Cambodian universities. These courses will focus on entrepreneurship, product development, design of sustainable production units, supply chain management ...

In three Cambodian universities (ITC, RUA, UBB), challenges open to students and young entrepreneurs will be organized in partnership with the private sector. The winning teams will receive technical support in specialized facilities (FoodLabs) dedicated to post-harvest technologies, food processing and packaging, as well as entrepreneurship training in a pre-incubation program.

Capacity building and laboratory programs will be open to students and young entrepreneurs from ITC, RUA and UBB to promote best laboratory practices and the prevention of health risks.

Finally, a specialization in agro-industry will be developed within the master's program in Entrepreneurship and Project Management of RULE.

A strong involvement of the stakeholders such as public institutions, companies, NGOs, student entrepreneurs themselves are expected throughout the duration of the project. This is the reason why the FoodSTEM team wishes to set up regular meetings in the form of specific workshops.

During the first workshop to be held during the kick-off week of the project on January 22, stakeholders will be consulted on the training and equipment needs, with particular emphasis on the difficulties encountered by

the entrepreneurs to create activities in the agrifood sector and in specific areas to focus on in terms of training and equipment.

This stakeholder consultation workshop is co-organized with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie as part of the C-NEUF "Espace Techno Incubation", a 3-year program aimed at providing technical support to pre-incubation with student entrepreneurs in promising sectors in Cambodia: Digital, Mechatronics and robotics, Energy, Agriculture and agri-food and developing culture and entrepreneurial practice.

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#### About ERASMUS Plus "Capacity building in Higher Education"

The "Erasmus +" capacity building program in the field of higher education aims to encourage cooperation between the EU and partner countries from all regions of the world in order to improve the quality of their higher education, to develop new programs, modernize and reform their university structures. Cambodian universities are particularly dynamic: at the end of 2019, Cambodian higher education institutions were involved in **Y** new projects for a total amount of **ZZ** M €.