



Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation Program Launch

Overview

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Sponsor

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Feed the Future

Fintrac

Good morning, everyone, and welcome. I'm Claire Starkey, the president of Fintrac, and we are excited to be here this morning and excited to be implementing the Partnering for Innovation project, formerly known as ACNI, but now much more aptly titled, what it actually is about, which is partnering with the private sector, and with R&D institutes, with universities, with development practitioners throughout the world to identify, to help commercialize, to help adapt technologies that are going to be transformational for small holders in the developing world.

Fintrac is the facilitator for Partnering for Innovation, but this is not a project about Fintrac. This is a project about harnessing the creative talents of so many folks who are already developing and distributing technologies. There are going to be grants available to ramp up commercialization, to help with distribution channels, to help with adaptation and customization. But as important or maybe even more importantly, this is going to create a knowledge management platform so that all of the things that are going on, currently, can be shared. And part of this is about the linkages. Part of it is about the partnerships, about the multi-tiered partnerships, about the possibilities and the potential of what can happen when we're all working together.

This is a flagship project for Feed the Future, and we are just excited to be part of it. We were given the award a little less than two months ago. Since then, we've met with over 100 different stakeholders, and today, the expression of interest is being posted to the AgriLinks website that will provide information to everyone on how to in fact fill out an application, submit a concept paper. We're going to hear from Jada McKenna, the deputy coordinator for Feed the Future about USAID's vision for this project and for technologies, development, and agriculture in general. We're going to be hearing from some of the Partnering for Innovation team, Bob Rabatsky, the director, Charity Hanif, our partnership manager.

We have several facilitating partners, and we'll have more during the process of implementing this project. One of our facilitating partners, No Innovation, is here today. We have a lot packed into a quick morning, but we do want to make even this a little innovative, so they're going to be working with everybody, trying to harness some of the ideas in this room about smallholder challenges. And we also have a professor from the University of Maryland here to make a brief presentation on a new soil testing technology, which we think is pretty reflective of the kinds of things that this program is going to be supporting, whether through simply sharing the information, linking these types of technologies and partners up with others, or in fact supporting them with various kinds of grants.

So we're excited to be here. I'm only the facilitator, which means after ten minutes, anybody is going to sort of get the boot so we can keep moving. But we're really, really excited to have you. Make sure that you've signed up, and make sure if you haven't to do it on your way out, and we really, really are here to make sure that everybody's ideas are heard, everybody's technologies are supported, and everybody gets attribution for what it is that they're doing, and that the sum – how does that expression go? The sum of our parts. How does it – now I'm going to completely – thank you. Excellent.

We're going to be better for all of us sort of moving together, and our mantra as a project or as a program, our mantra is how is it helping the smallholder. Well, first, is it helping the

smallholder, and secondly, how. And if we're able to answer that question well, then we know we're on the right track. We also have a philosophy, which you'll all find actually is part of the exercise that we'll be doing with you later. We have a philosophy. We borrowed it from William Gibson, the sci-fi novelist, and it said, "The future is here. It's just not evenly distributed yet." Thanks. And Tjada McKenna now please, deputy coordinator of Feed the Future.

[End of Audio]