



## Engaging private sector actors in agricultural markets in Guyana has multiple benefits for fresh produce market actors

Agro In is a relatively new input supplier in Guyana providing agriculture crop solutions from seeds to crop protection: inclusive of pesticides, rodenticides and crop nutrition. The owner and CEO, Mr. Oumdeo Ramdeo, himself from an agricultural community, **created the company in 2013 with a vision to “promote sustainable agriculture through innovation and technology”**. Seizing on the market opportunities for organic and non-organic agrochemical inputs to farmers, Agro In partnered with Swiss-based, Chinese-owned, Syngenta Regional Distribution partners, Renwick DUWEST, the world’s largest crop chemical producer to reintroduce its line of products to Guyana. The previous distributor had failed to grow the business but Mr. Ramdeo was confident, with his connections and passion to contribute to the sector, that he could make it profitable.

**The PROPEL-Agro In partnership began in August 2017** after an introduction was made at a PROPEL Buyer/Seller Meeting at FoodMaxx Supermarket. At the meeting PROPEL shared with farmers the standards and expectations of High Value Market players and discussed the specific vegetables that are in demand to determine which producers would be able to consistently supply the quality and quantity required at FoodMaxx. At the time, Agro In and FoodMaxx were collaborating to provide technical support to the selected farmers supplying the supermarket with fresh produce. Agro In intended to work along with these farmers to ensure they adhered to good agriculture practices while at the same time promoting their products through educational based promotional activities.



*Agro In PROPEL and FoodMaxx in consultation with Farmers to supply high quality and quantity of fresh produce for the Supermarket*

**In a competitive market, Agro In was eager to collaborate with PROPEL seeing it as a good opportunity for the company to expand their network and strengthen their presence within the agriculture sector.** From the inception, Agro In’s Technical Sales Team and Agronomist have always demonstrated a high willingness to lead initiatives by providing the necessary technical support and supply of inputs to farmers.



*Field Schools carried out by Argon In Agronomist Darshanand Mohabir (left) and NAREI*

In 2017 Agro In joined PROPEL in its onion pilots and environmentally sustainable initiatives. For their part, Agro In supplied seeds, inputs and technical extension support to producers to establish onion plots in Regions 5, 6 & 10. They also used the opportunity to gather data on the efficacy of their products. **Through education-based promotional activities such as farmer field schools and sponsoring demo/pilot plots, Agro In was able to expand its market and gain a wider reach of farmers. As farmers gained confidence in their products they saw an increase in sales.**

As a result of the success of the PROPEL onion trials and the demand for locally produced onions, Agro In is encouraged to continue promoting and supporting domestic onion production in order to build the onion value chain. In fact, the company is already importing and selling onion seeds to farmers. They are also co-funding with PROPEL the purchase of a direct seed planter as an introduction of modern agriculture equipment to make the expansion of onion production in Guyana more efficient and cost effective.

## PROPEL embraces an Inclusive Approach to programming to encourage Innovation and Sustainability

The PROPEL - Agro In partnership has led to the implementation of a number of agricultural initiatives with other key market actors, most notable being the National Agricultural Research & Extension Institute (NAREI), the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board, the University of Guyana (UG), the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC), as well as Producer Groups and other input suppliers.



*Agro In leading a Training Session for NAREI Extension Officers*



*Kevin George, Agro In's Technical Sales Executive conducting capacity building initiative with NAREI Regional offices*

**In September 2017 PROPEL and Agro In provided capacity building training to these agencies and in particular to extension officers on New and Available Chemical Approaches and Safety in Crop Production.** The training provided extension officers with knowledge in the proper use and application of chemicals in crop production as well as keeping them up to date with innovative product lines. It is expected that this knowledge will be further shared with farmers through their extension support.

**Agro In has benefited from the linkages facilitated by PROPEL and the company plans to continue to engage all stakeholders in the sector through farmer field schools, community meetings, agency collaboration and sector heads.** According to Kelvin George Agro In's Agronomist:

*"Agro In's collaboration with producers and other agencies will continue beyond the PROPEL project. We're continuing to work with individual extension officers and, on a weekly basis, we work directly with 15 to 20 farmers in different communities to share our knowledge."*

**He highlighted that the company's collaboration with PROPEL has enhanced its networking capacity and sales have increased by 20% during the period August 2017-January 2018.** He is satisfied that the uptake by farmers reflects the usefulness and effectiveness of their products.

Agro In intends to continue to grow their business, in partnership with key stakeholders such as NAREI, and to expand and strengthen their community based relationships through participatory capacity building sessions to further increase their market share.

**Today, Agro In has expanded its portfolio to include a variety of inputs from other suppliers previously unavailable in Guyana. In just 5 years, the company has become a key player in the sector and since its partnership with WUSC Caribbean, Agro In has gained market entry in Parika, Mahaica, East Berbice Corentyne, Sandvoort and Lethem.**

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