



## Press release

13 November

### **Project PACMAN: AFD and CIRAD to develop sustainable management tools for zoonotic diseases, in partnership with IRD, the Department of Veterinary Services and the University of Zimbabwe**

On November 16, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) will sign an agreement to develop the Zimbabwean agricultural sector's capacity in biotechnology to strengthen the country's surveillance and control system for animal, plant and zoonotic diseases. CIRAD will receive a grant of 2 million euros. As funding beneficiary, CIRAD will manage services, equipment and consumables, which will then be transferred to relevant partners. The project, entitled PACMAN, is starting in 2020 and will last three years. Its official launch will follow the inauguration of a molecular biology laboratory essential to Zimbabwe's autonomy in this field.

The PACMAN project will complement the actions started by the CAZCOM project (Strengthening Zimbabwe's Capacity for Animal and Zoonotic Disease Control) funded by the FSPI (Solidarity Fund for Innovative Projects) of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. CAZCOM contributed to the training of dozens of Zimbabwean staff involved in zoonotic diseases and to the establishment of the aforementioned laboratory with international standards, inaugurated on November 16. The PACMAN project will allow for a scale-up of current efforts. The implementation of the EU-funded LIPS (Livestock Production Systems Zimbabwe) project under DESIRA initiative (Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture) will also strengthen the impact and the sustainability of the PACMAN project's actions.

This 3-year project has the objective to set up a biomolecular platform to facilitate the control of animal diseases and support the country's agricultural sector. Agriculture in Zimbabwe represents almost 15% of the GDP, more than 30% of export revenues and provides a direct or indirect livelihood for around 70% of the country's population. Zimbabwe is currently facing a food security challenge, due to increased frequency of drought, degradation of arable land and rapid population growth. The livestock sector is threatened by increasing prevalence of animal diseases and needs stronger veterinary systems to better control those diseases and estimate the risks linked to zoonotic diseases.

The PACMAN project has three main components:

- Strengthening Zimbabwe's biotechnology capabilities and making them accessible
- Training partners in the latest molecular biology and serology techniques for disease surveillance and control, quality control and research

- Setting up an action, partnership, financing and sustainability plan for the biotechnology platform to ensure its operation and impact over the long term. The project will also set up a management and monitoring plan.

CIRAD, as funding beneficiary, will partner with the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), which also has recognised expertise in the field of setting up and operating biotechnology platforms. CIRAD will partner with the Faculty of Veterinary sciences of the UZ, which will host the platform within its campus (a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Zimbabwe will be signed in that respect), and the Department of Veterinary Services on the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture & Rural Resettlement.

The project implementation will significantly improve the autonomy of Zimbabwe to detect and control diseases, which have a high economic impact, thus strengthening the resilience of the agricultural economy to the effects of climate change.

**Contacts:** CIRAD: [presse@cirad.fr](mailto:presse@cirad.fr) - IRD: [cecile.begard@ird.fr](mailto:cecile.begard@ird.fr) - AFD: [penfolde@afd.fr](mailto:penfolde@afd.fr)

**Scientist:** [mathieu.bourgarel@cirad.fr](mailto:mathieu.bourgarel@cirad.fr)

#### **AFD**

**Headquartered in Paris, AFD is an inclusive public financial institution and the main actor in France's development policy.** It makes commitments to projects that genuinely improve the everyday lives of people, in developing and emerging countries and in the French overseas territories. AFD works in many sectors - energy, health, biodiversity, water, digital technologies, training – and supports the transition to a safer, more equitable and more sustainable world: a world in common. Its action is fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with the Paris Agreement on climate. Through its network of 85 local agencies, AFD operates in 109 countries and is currently supporting over 3,600 development projects. In 2018, it earmarked EUR 11.4bn to finance these projects. The Agency is rated AA (Fitch Ratings) - stable outlook. [www.afd.fr](http://www.afd.fr)

**CIRAD is the French agricultural research and international cooperation organization working for the sustainable development of tropical and Mediterranean regions.** It works with its partners to build knowledge and solutions and invent resilient farming systems for a more sustainable, inclusive world. It mobilizes science, innovation and training in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Its expertise supports the entire range of stakeholders, from producers to public policymakers, to foster biodiversity protection, agroecological transitions, food system sustainability, health (of plants, animals and ecosystems), sustainable development of rural territories, and their resilience to climate change. CIRAD works in some fifty countries on every continent, thanks to the expertise of its 1650 staff members, including 1140 scientists, backed by a global network of some 200 partners. As such, it supports French scientific diplomacy operations. [www.cirad.fr](http://www.cirad.fr)

**IRD is an internationally recognised multidisciplinary organisation working primarily in partnership with Mediterranean and inter-tropical countries.** IRD via its network and presence in fifty or so countries takes an original approach to research, expertise, training and knowledge sharing, to the benefit of countries and regions that make science and innovation key drivers in their development. <https://southern-africa-cnrs-cirad.ird.fr/>