

# Cambridge collaboration to launch online platform mapping agribusiness in Africa

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'AGRIinsight' platform will reduce cost and risk of investing in Africa's agriculture sector

Cambridge, UK 11th April, 2016 – AGRInsight Ltd and Arcus Global, alumni of Allia Future Business Centre in Cambridge, today announced a new partnership to provide an online mapping platform to support agribusiness investment in the developing world.

The partnership combines AGRInsight's 25 years of knowledge and expertise in the African agribusiness sector with Arcus, a leader in development, transforming Government organisations through using modern technology. Arcus have taken an equity position in AGRInsight and will provide specialist IT and cloud computing expertise to help develop the platform.

The first version of the mapping platform will launch in May, with a set of early adopters from the public and private sectors in East and West Africa. The AGRInsight platform will drive new investment into the African Agribusiness sector by consolidating and mapping information in a quick, reliable and easy to use format. The platform will create new opportunities for income-generation, foster well-informed, profitable investments in this growing market and facilitate collaborations between investors, agribusinesses, farmers and suppliers.

Africa's agriculture sector presents vast opportunities for socioeconomic development. With a world population increasing by a further 2 billion by 2050, global food production must double. However investment in the sub-Saharan Africa remains a fraction of what is needed. One of the main obstacles has been the lack of reliable information available on agriculture in the region. Information, when it is available, is often in different formats embedded in word or pdf documents, excel spreadsheets or databases.

AGRInsight overcomes these challenges by bringing together relevant and reliable data onto one platform. The platform will provide agribusinesses with an efficient and secure way to store and share information, locate, and contact suppliers, customers and investors online. The mapping tools will also allow NGO's to target their support and resources to maximise impact, improving logistical and operational efficiency and boosting growth in the sector. Improved visibility and consolidation of reliable information will raise awareness of unexploited opportunities in the sector, driving investment by reducing both cost and risk.

Using the latest cloud computing technology and a smart phone, subscribers to the platform can add their own profile, location, data and requirements, and easily contact other agribusinesses, NGO's and investors who have done the same. This data can be overlaid with public information on the platform such as infrastructure, soil and climatic conditions, allowing better planning, coordination and targeting of resources across the region.

One of the first users of the AGRInsight platform is Aspuna Group, a commodities trading business who are setting up a commercial cassava processing plant in West Africa. They will use the interactive tools to map out and communicate with farmers they work with. Operational information relevant to the successful development of the cassava supply chain, such as seed varieties used and production data will

be recorded and mapped onto the platform.

Maria-Yassin Jah, Managing Director of Aspuna noted: "We are delighted to be partnering with AGRInsight. The tool developed by the AGRInsight team is fantastic. Incorporating this tool into our operations in the West Coast Region of the Gambia will help us optimize our supply chain. We are looking forward to a long-term partnership with AGRInsight and the rolling out of their platform into other locations in the Gambia."

Patrick Guyver, Founder of AGRInsight said: "Working in the agriculture sector in Sub-Saharan Africa for over 25 years, it has become increasingly clear that access to information is the major gap in the market, and the main obstacle to a better functioning sector capable of attracting greater investment. We strongly believe in the potential of the agriculture sector to generate wide-reaching positive change, while also delivering strong returns to investors. By providing clear, relevant, and usable data that can be tailored to each organisation's individual needs, the AGRInsight platform will plug the information gap and reduce the cost and risk of investing in African agribusiness, helping the region's agriculture sector deliver on its potential."

He continued: "We feel that providing access to relevant data in targeted and smarter ways will appeal to the younger generation of farmers in Africa. The introduction of cheaper next generation smart phones will open up a new world of possibilities for their businesses. It will enable them to collaborate with other agripreneurs to build a crowd-sourcing style movement to benefit all."

Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a USD 1 trillion industry with urban food markets set to increase fourfold to exceed USD 400 billion by 2030. This will require major agribusiness investments in production, processing, logistics, market infrastructure, and retail network.

"We are proud to partner with AGRInsight," said Denis Kaminskiy, CEO for Arcus Global. "We are using cloud technology to empower farmers and co-operatives with the ability to develop new business relationships with investors and stakeholders."

Caroline Hyde, Director of Workspace and Enterprise support at Allia said: "We are delighted and proud that the community we have built at our Future Business Centre has enabled these two organisations to work together to develop such a significant product with so much potential to make an impact in developing countries. Our enterprise support advisers here and our Social Incubator East programme have worked with and provided business support to AGRInsight for over two years and so we are excited to see the imminent launch of their innovative platform."

Notes to Editor:

About AGRInsight

AGRInsight was conceived by Prorustica Ltd, an advisory firm for public private partnership-based agricultural development, and has received support from Social Incubator East as well as Foundation East. The AGRInsight platform launches its first version in May. Visit [www.agriinsight.com](http://www.agriinsight.com) to learn more about AGRInsight and register your interest in the online platform.

## About Arcus

Arcus provides a full suite of technology services to the UK Public Sector with a unique proposition in delivery that includes: IT strategy advice, enterprise architecture, migration and integration services, training and custom digital platform development, as well as easy to use and innovative full systems on leading cloud platforms.

Arcus are the UK Public Sector market leaders in all services on Salesforce.com, Amazon Web Services and other world leading technology stacks. We work with Local and Central Government, Universities, Health and not-for-profit organisations. For further information, please visit [www.arcusglobal.com](http://www.arcusglobal.com)

## About Allia

Allia is a Cambridge based UK charity that started in 1999. It supports people and organisations to create a positive social impact. Allia does this in three ways, through social finance, through social innovation and through workspace with enterprise support. Allia has Future Business Centres in Cambridge and Peterborough. They are a home for enterprises who want to improve life for people or protect the planet. They provide start-ups and growing enterprises with high quality affordable workspace, business support and opportunities to build a successful business, co-locating with like-minded organisations.