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Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) advocates investing in innovation to benefit smallholders

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Field data quality is the key to ensure compliance with the upcoming EU Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products (EUDR). However, the rigorous farm data required is hard for companies to achieve. It is particularly challenging to get this data within the tropical commodities sector, where around 75% of crops are grown by smallholder farmers. Having partnered with a leading business in the sector will contribute to building more equitable food systems as technology revolutionizes agriculture.

Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), is keen to support technological innovations that improve the ability of smallholders to enhance their livelihoods. Recently CFC invested EUR 300,000 in Netherlands-based firm Meridia, which is driving

transparency in food chains and ensuring the equitable treatment of smallholder farmers.Â From the CFC's perspective, Meridia offers benefits all along the supply chain. The firm specialises in collecting, analysing, and verifying high-quality data in smallholder supply chains. This helps food companies achieve environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards and compliance, while building supply chains that are inclusive of smallholders.

Meridia helps companies overcome these challenges and prepare for compliance. Through assessing supply chain data and verifying its quality, compliant and none-compliant data are separated. Data verification can also unlock other benefits, such as accurate farmer payments and carbon calculations.

Chief Executive Officer Thomas Vaassen describes Meridia as â??a geospatial data company that puts farmers at the centre of its work to make supply chains transparent, sustainable, and inclusive of smallholders. Tracing commodities back to the farms where they were grown has historically been difficult. But, our software provides accurate farm mapping and field data collection â?? farms can be mapped even in the most remote locations. As part of several large consortiums, we have taken up important data stewardship activities to secure land rights and tackle issues related to agroforestry for cocoa farmers and cooperatives in West Africa and Indonesia.â??â??Â

Collecting this data has numerous advantages for smallholders. â??They become visible and can access regulated supply chains, sustainability programmes, and investments to maintain a stable income and stop deforestation.â?? In addition, farmers gain better insights into their productivity and a deeper understanding of their business. For example, exact farm size and production data enable accurate yield per farm calculations.Â This verified data also enables smallholders to secure land rights for themselves and future generations. Having land documents embeds prosperity by giving them greater control over land use and the income it generates.Â