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CSIRO launches Thailand-Australia Venture Exchange to accelerate agrifood innovation

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The cross-border initiative will connect startups and SMEs with research institutions, investors and industry partners to advance sustainable agrifood systems across Southeast Asia

Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, has partnered with Thailand's Food Innopolis and the Research University Network (RUN) to launch the Thailand-Australia Venture Exchange Program, a bilateral initiative designed to accelerate agrifood innovation, strengthen research-commercialisation pathways and foster cross-border collaboration between emerging enterprises in both countries.

Applications for the inaugural cohort are now open and will close on 31 July, with the program targeting startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) developing technologies and solutions across the agrifood value chain.

The first round of the initiative will focus on Sustainable Agrifood Systems Development, selecting up to 15 companies, with balanced representation from Australia and Thailand. The program seeks to catalyse innovation by enabling participating businesses to access new markets, forge strategic partnerships and accelerate the commercial deployment of technologies addressing shared food security and sustainability challenges.

Over a twelve-week period, participating organisations will undertake a comprehensive market acceleration programme combining virtual learning with in-country engagement. The initiative includes funded market immersion visits to both Australia and Thailand, participation in industry events, tailored business coaching, access to research infrastructure and scientific expertise, introductions to investors, customers and commercial partners, and strategic support to refine international go-to-market strategies.

According to Amelia Fyfield, Director of CSIRO Southeast Asia, the programme reflects the growing depth of scientific and innovation cooperation between Australia and Thailand under the broader Innovation for Food Sustainability initiative.

She said the collaboration establishes practical pathways for agrifood innovators in both countries to leverage world-class research capabilities, strengthen commercial partnerships and accelerate the development of sustainable food technologies capable of delivering regional impact.

The initiative is supported by the Australian Government's Southeast Asia and Australia Government Partnerships program, reinforcing Australia's broader strategy of deepening innovation-led economic engagement across the Indo-Pacific.

The programme also builds upon the successful implementation of CSIRO's Venture Exchange Program in Singapore, which helped participating companies strengthen investment readiness, establish international partnerships and expand into new overseas markets.

As governments and industries increasingly prioritise resilient food systems, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable value chains, the Thailand-Australia Venture Exchange Program is expected to provide an important platform for commercialising emerging agrifood technologies while strengthening regional innovation ecosystems and fostering long-term scientific collaboration between the two countries.