

## Press release

### **Opportunity for foreign trade: opening up new supply markets virtually** Import Promotion Desk supports companies with virtual fairs and B2B meetings

**Bonn/Berlin, 24.11.2020 – The corona pandemic poses challenges for companies worldwide: contact restrictions make international trade relations and the search for new products and reliable suppliers more difficult. Many of the international trade fairs that serve as important contact exchanges have been postponed. Import Promotion Desk (IPD), the import promotion initiative funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), has developed a variety of online services to continue its work. In virtual meetings and trade fairs, IPD experts support German and European companies in opening up new supply markets and connect them with selected producers from developing countries and emerging nations.**

In autumn and spring, in the traditional trade fair season, IPD strengthens its measures to promote imports and presents carefully screened producers from selected partner countries, both at virtual trade fairs and in its own series of virtual matchmaking events. German and European importers have the opportunity to meet new trading partners despite the COVID-19 restrictions. IPD focuses on the forestry and agricultural sectors. These include the sectors natural ingredients for food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, fresh fruit and vegetables, cut flowers and technical wood. Furthermore, IPD is active in the tourism sector, which also makes an important contribution to effective economic development in developing countries and emerging nations.

“The demand for virtual networking is huge”, says Dr. Julia Bellinghausen, Head of IPD. “We have already been able to arrange a large number of contacts between importers and our partner countries and the discussions between potential business partners are very intensive. Even during the pandemic we are in close contact with the producers in our partner countries and support them in their export to Europe. We continue to screen the exporters and thus we can guarantee criteria such as product quality, exportability and capacity.”

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“The COVID-19 restrictions are hitting foreign trade hard”, explains Gregor Wolf, Member of the executive board of the German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services Association (BGA), who initiated the establishment of IPD together with the development organisation sequa gGmbH. “With the newly created virtual platforms, importers can continue their sourcing and producers from developing countries and emerging nations can find new sales markets. Thus IPD closes a strategic gap at the interface of development cooperation and foreign trade even in these times.”

The virtual trade fair calendar of IPD for the new year is already well filled. The IPD experts will accompany producers from the 13 partner countries to numerous trade fairs, including Fruit Logistica 2021, Biofach 2021, Carrefour du Bois 2021, ITB Berlin 2021. In addition, further IPD matchmaking events are planned, for example on cut flowers and food ingredients and fresh fruit & vegetables from Africa.

#### **Import Promotion Desk (IPD)**

Import Promotion Desk (IPD) is an **initiative for import promotion** in Germany.

The IPD fulfils a hinge function between small and medium-sized enterprises in selected emerging markets and developing countries on the one hand and European importers on the other. The objective is to integrate the partner countries into global trade, thereby contributing towards sustainable economic development in these countries.

IPD introduces exporters from its partner countries to the EU market and assists them in setting up trading relations. For European importers, the IPD opens up new supply sources in the partner countries and assists them in the procurement process for specific products.

The IPD is currently active in 13 countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Colombia, Nepal, Peru, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Ukraine.

The IPD focusses on specific product groups: fresh fruit and vegetables, natural ingredients for foods, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, technical wood, cut flowers and sustainable tourism.

IPD is established and implemented by sequa gGmbH, the globally operating development organisation of German industry, and the Federation of German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (BGA.).

IPD is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Further information at [www.importpromotiondesk.de](http://www.importpromotiondesk.de).

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