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Madagascar on the road to food self-sufficiency?



Rice harvest in Madagascar (illustration image).
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The Malagasy government has just announced with great fanfare that it is on the road to food self-sufficiency, following the signing of a partnership with a company from the United Arab Emirates specializing in large-scale agricultural production. In one of the most forgotten and

isolated regions of the country, in the southwest of the island, an irrigated and modern production center on an area of 60,000 hectares should be created by the end of the year

From our correspondent in Antananarivo,

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In 2019, Madagascar imported 350,000 tonnes of white rice. From ancient history, hopes Lucien Ranarivelo, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries: " *The goal of this project is to produce most if not all of these 350,000 tonnes of rice white so that Madagascar begins to no longer import rice and achieve rice self-sufficiency by the end of the current government's mandate. "*

It was Elite Agro LLC, an Emirati group, which won the call for expressions of interest to develop this 60,000 hectares of land located 240 km north of Toliara, in the Morombe district.

If points of the partnership still remain to be refined (NDLA: additional field data collections are underway at this very moment to know the nature of the soils, possible drilling areas, etc.), the basis of the negotiation is already established between the government and the promoter.

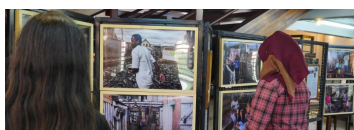
" *They will bring the technology, the expertise, the material means and the government makes the land available - which belongs to it, so we do not touch the land holdings of small producers - for a period of 30 years. It is not sold to the promoter. (<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20120716-accaparement-terres-toujours-actualite-madagascar>) In return, the government undertakes to buy all of the production from this agricultural center. The promoter does not demand a lot from the Malagasy government. Their only requirement is that the production from this area be purchased by Madagascar at world price. However Madagascar has negotiated so that it is slightly below the current world price. "*

The one-year pilot project is to be launched during the year. The Dubai society will have a lot to do to ensure the profitability of its investments (estimated between \$ 5,000 and \$ 6,000 per hectare) and achieve the production volume negotiated in the contract with the Malagasy government. Currently, the average rice yield per hectare on the island is around 2.7 tonnes when it would take at least 5 tonnes to meet the minimum target of 300,000 tonnes of rice per year. Quite a challenge.

Chronology and key figures

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