PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

YEAR 2 PROGRESS REPORT

SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION THROUGH STRENGTHENED AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES

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Message from the Director

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) is very pleased to share with you the final report of the Project *Supporting Smallholder Farmers in Asia and Pacific Islands Region through Strengthened Agricultural Services (SAAS)* that the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has graciously supported.

This report represents more than three years of fruitful collaborative work and partnerships with like-minded institutions who believe that improving rural advisory services (RAS) are important to achieve sustainable agricultural and rural development. In this Project, we focus on strengthening institutions who can strategically deliver effective RAS in their respective countries and region. These capacity building activities are coupled with efforts to establish through policy an enabling environment where information, best practices, new technologies, and the outputs of research may easily flow and be shared to its intended beneficiaries, especially to our smallholder farmers.

Highlights of this report are the encouraging stories from the ground that tell how advisory services can change farmers' lives by helping them increase their farm productivity and income so that they will be able to provide for their families and contribute to the bigger objective of providing food to a constantly growing population.

Lessons from this Project would serve as useful take-off point in implementing SEARCA's 11th Five-Year Plan focused on strengthening academe-industry-government interconnectivity to promote agricultural and rural development. Under this Plan, one of our goals is to ramp up investments and efforts on agricultural innovation which would require extension services that will effectively deliver these new technologies and best practices to their intended beneficiaries.

Finally, allow me to express SEARCA's appreciation to IFAD for entrusting to us this very important Project. We also thank our partners from Bangladesh, Fiji, and the Philippines for their cooperation which proved to be very crucial in its success. We look forward to your continued support to our Center particularly in further strengthening agricultural advisory services in Asia and the Pacific.

Glenn B. Gregorio
Director

List of Acronyms

AAS	Agricultural Advisory Services
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
AESA	Agricultural Extension in South Asia
AEW	Agricultural Extension Worker
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AFEN	Agriculture and Fisheries Network
APIRAS	Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network
APR	Asia-Pacific Region
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATI	Agricultural Training Institute
ATI-RTC-CAR	Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region
AWGATE	ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agriculture Training and Extension
AWPB	Annual Workplan and Budget
BAEN	Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network
BASA	Bangladesh Association of Social Advancement
BARC	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
BPN	Best Practice Note
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CDMD	Career Development and Management Division
CDPs	Community Development Plans
CF	Country Forum
CHARMP2	Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project
CNA	Capacity Needs Assessment
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CSFBS	Climate-Smart Farmer Business School
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DLF	Department of Livestock Services
DOF	Department of Fisheries (Bangladesh)
EAS	Extension and Advisory Services
EU	European Union
FAPP	Fiji Agricultural Partnerships Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBS	Farmer Business School
FDB	Fiji Development Bank
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KM	Knowledge Management
LGU	Local Government Unit
LRD	Land Resources Division
MA/MAO/CA	Municipal Agriculturists/Municipal Agriculture Officers/City Agriculturists
MEALS	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement

MORDI	Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations
NATP	National Agricultural Technology Program
NFP	National Focal Points
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NSC	National Steering Committees
PACE	Promoting Agricultural Commercialization and Enterprises
PCDF	Partners for Community Development Foundation
PhilEASNet	Philippine Extension and Advisory Services Network
PHVA	Partnership in High Value Agriculture
PKSF	Palli Karma Shayak Foundation (an Apex body of Bangladesh NGOs)
PICT	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PIRAS	Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services
PMO	Project Management Office
PO	Partner Organization in Bangladesh; Peoples Organization in Philippines
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRODOC	Project Document
PS4L	Pacific Seed for Life Programme
RMP	Rural Millionaire Programme (Fiji)
RTC	Rural Training Centre (Fiji)
SAAS	Supporting Smallholder Farmers in Asia and Pacific Islands Region Through Strengthened Agricultural Advisory Services
SCDP	Second Crop Diversification Project
SDI	Social Development Initiatives
SEA4RAS	Southeast Asian Network for Rural Advisory Services
SEARCA	Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture
SMEs	small and medium enterprises
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
USP	University of the South Pacific
YPARD	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

Background

For many years development projects in the region have invested in organizing smallholder farmers to achieve economies of scale to access services (organizing demand for a variety of services); however, there has not been any organized response from service providers to match the emerging demand. While public and private service providers exist, they are not yet capable to meet the diverse pool of request for services coming from organized farmers. In fact, many IFAD supported projects as well as those supported by other development partners usually have difficulty in mobilizing adequate agro-technology based service providers. In order for smallholder and indigenous peoples' organizations to access services and goods and benefit from input and output markets, availability of service providers with production related expertise as well as agri-business and entrepreneurship skills is critical. For these reasons, AAS - which for over two decades have received minimal financial support from developing countries and donors alike- are back on the development agenda and should be organized in a systems approach, with strong roles for public, private, and civil society sectors.

Since 2008, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) with its key constituents including the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services network (APIRAS) have been championing capacity development and organization of AAS services providers at meso, national, and sub-regional levels, and advocating for an appropriate enabling environment that allows smallholder farmers to access market-oriented advisory services. Some outcomes of this championing include the presence, recognition, and representation of advisory services at the global level (IFAD Farmers' Forum, Rio+20, Sustainable Development Goals, Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development), regional level (Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme – national investment plans include AAS; Caribbean Week of Agriculture with CARICOM), and national level (the formation of AAS platforms active in policy dialogue and sharing of best practices e.g. in Uganda, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Bangladesh, India, and Paraguay).

The use and demand of AAS networks and country specific fora to lead, exchange knowledge, and provide policy advocacy is reaffirmed by the creation of over 12 sub-regional and regional AAS networks worldwide over the past 5 years (including APIRAS, the Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA), the Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (PIRAS), the Mekong Extension Learning Alliance, (MELA, and, most recently, the Rural Advisory Services for Southeast Asia (RAS4SEA)). The GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training has championed the "New Extensionist" concept and is working to provide a learning kit on this and on core competencies for AAS that include "agripreneurship." The GFRAS Global Good Practices Initiative (www.betterextension.org) shares knowledge of and experiences in AAS approaches in an easily-understandable and accessible way with practitioners in the field. GFRAS' engagement to foster policy dialogues, including policy assessments and policy advocacy trainings in Africa will start bearing fruits and provide lessons learned, which will be considered in this project. In the Asia-Pacific Region, APIRAS promoted the New Extensionist" through several fora it had been invited to, "The Extensionist" has been adopted/adapted and integrated in the agricultural extension curriculum or subjects by some higher education institutions .

IFAD also co-financed the second phase (2013-2017) of the Medium- Term Cooperation Programme with Farmers' Organizations in Asia and the Pacific Region[1] (including Fiji,

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[1] The objectives of the MTCP2 include strengthening institutional and operational capacity of farmers' organizations (FOs) as well better positioning rural smallholder interests' in policy processes. FOs are one of the many different service providers that

Bangladesh, and Philippines) through a grant. The grant sought linkages with the MTCP2 programme to exchange learnings on how to better serve smallholder farmers through improved and innovative AAS.

Under the SAAS Project, country-level initiatives of engaging farmer organizations were evident Some technologies, innovative cultural practices, and management of their respective organizations were documented and packaged into best practices modules, and accessible in the SAAS website.   Amidst the short duration of the SAAS Project, milestones were achieved with the collaboration/partnership with complementing organizations, like the IFAD country Projects, national organizations of agriculture in the three countries, higher education institutions, research and development institutions, and farmers'/people's organizations, to name a few. This network of institutions form the bedrock of a strong social capital to ensure institutionalization of SAAS project gains and moving forward.

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) recognized the efforts all the ongoing efforts at improving and innovating AAS in the region and agreed to take on the task of implementing this project called "Supporting Smallholder Farmers in Asia and Pacific Islands Region through Strengthened Agricultural Advisory Services" or SAAS. In doing so, SEARCA further believed that the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), with the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services network (APIRAS), could be a key partner in strengthening AAS initiatives in the region.

With the said grant and its embedded deliverables, SEARCA intended to strengthen APIRAS, a sub-regional network, and country fora through activities that include capacity strengthening, policy advocacy, and knowledge exchange. Experience from support by IFAD to AFAAS (African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services – the African constituent of GFRAS) showed that pluralistic and demand-driven fora can mobilize resources from public and private investors as well as influence policy on AAS delivery[2]. AFAAS experiences have also shown that country fora need to have a certain level of institutionalization in order to be truly operational.

For AAS to effectively and efficiently play their role in agricultural development, SEARCA recognized that the enormous challenges facing AAS organizations and providers need to be holistically addressed at all levels. Hence, SEARCA's approach and strategy for this project was to use existing structures (GFRAS, APIRAS, AESA, PIRAS, and country fora) and tested approaches (AFAAS experiences in Africa) to pilot the strengthening of AAS actors on national level, and knowledge management in the region. **Figure 1** shows regional and sub-regional networks which are GFRAS members.

The project addressed and built on the lessons learned from the AFAAS country fora[3] (CF) model and the experiences of GFRAS regarding capacity strengthening, policy dialogues, and

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can be mobilized to provide demand-driven AAS to organized and individual farmers. This grant will build on existing results achieved by the MTCP2 grant with respect to FOs, and will at the same time complement it by reaching out to a wider array of stakeholders engaged in AAS.

[2] For instance, the external evaluation of the IFAD-funded AFAAS project showed that "functional country fora (CFs) have provided professional platforms for harmonization and improvement of AAS, involving key stakeholders. The CFs have stimulated interest among stakeholders for learning and sharing of knowledge for innovative on AAS approaches. They are both recognized in their countries as consultation partners regarding AAS policies and practices. Currently some fora are participating in formulating new policies. The CF have moreover stimulated improved performance among the AAS providers and at least one of the fora is well on the way to resource sustainability." This findings have been further verified through the last AFAAS supervision mission held in July 2015 in Uganda.

[3] Country fora bring together stakeholders from the national agricultural innovation system under a common umbrella to identify priority areas of concern to be addressed through collaborative information sharing, joint activities, and partnerships. The objectives of country fora are (i) to strengthen the capacity of AAS stakeholders at country level to lead AAS development, (ii) to mobilize, reflect, and learn about how to improve AAS provision within an agricultural innovation system framework, and (iii) to be able to utilize (within and between countries) the human capacity that is being developed for undertaking reforms in AAS. (See http://www.afaas-africa.org/.)

knowledge management worldwide (see more information on www.g-fras.org). GFRAS allocated funds for the coming three years to test and refine learning materials on core competencies for AAS, to refine and test an approach to strengthen capacity to engage in policy dialogue, and to strengthen knowledge management in other regions. With the assistance of GFRAS, SEARCA ensured that these experiences fed continuously into the activity planning of this grant.

SEARCA also ensured that major insights from AFAAS from a similar IFAD grant, especially regarding CF, wereincluded. Lessons learned included that CFs provide an important support for AAS stakeholders to become organized and be strengthened in a country, to share and exchange knowledge, and to provide advocacy. However, the African experience shows that stakeholders in different countries have different needs and demands regarding purpose, functions, modes of operations, and institutionalization of country fora. Hence, a stakeholder needs assessment, including an assessment of the enabling environment was deemed crucial to establish a baseline and strategic planning and continuous monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The establishment of country for was perceived as a step-by-step process, where both operationalization and institutionalization, as well as the execution of first small tasks are parallel. While it has been proven worth building on existing structures and networks, the AFAAS CF have also shown that it takes time and consolidated efforts to engage with all stakeholders (especially the private sector), which has consequences regarding realism in goal-setting. It was also stated that a CF needs a certain kind of institutionalization in order to be fully functional, which in many cases requires a champion to guide through the process. For these reasons, the project focused on three countries only, where country fora were developed over the course of three years.
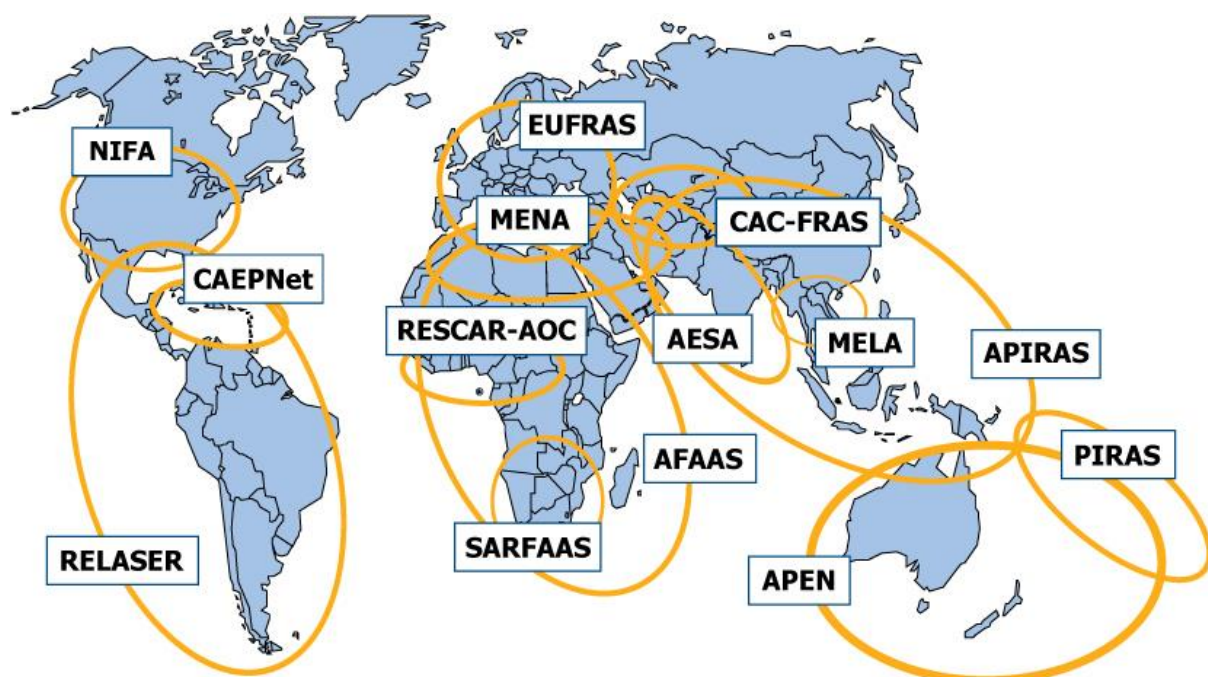
Figure 1: GFRAS Regional and Sub-regional Networks as of 9 October 2015.

The project was implemented in the **Philippines, Bangladesh, and Fiji**. Taking into account lessons learned from the African chapter, they have been selected based on their ownership, presence of champions, enabling environment, and recognition of the need to organize a multiplicity of AAS service providers to respond to the diversity of technology and service needs of smallholder farmers and complement other IFAD initiatives in their respective

countries. These countries indicated interest and willingness to consider providing support for the institutionalization and sustainability of the country platforms once established and consolidated for strengthening AAS and the national agricultural innovation system. The selection of the focus countries was an inclusive/participatory rather than a competitive process; however, priority was given to these three countries because they have demonstrated their commitment and will to use own resources in AAS[4]. In targeting these three countries as pilots, and in working very closely with IFAD country operations the project intended to strengthen the capacity of up to 45 primary implementing agencies at the strategic level and three AAS country fora; two sub-regional networks (AESA, PIRAS); and APIRAS as the regional network. It shall likewise benefitted about 555 AAS professionals from all levels and institutions. Prior to the SAAS project intervention, the three pilot countries had initial activities and programs that aimed to foster AAS in their respective countries. Said activities and programs are described below:

- In **Bangladesh**, the meeting to launch the Bangladesh Extension Network (BEN) was organized by the Second Crop Diversification Project (SCDP) of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) on 1 September 2014. This meeting was attended by 76 extension professionals representing different sectors, agricultural universities, research centers, private sector and NGOs and the meeting constituted an ad hoc executive committee to take forward the activities of BEN[5]. During the second meeting (24 September 2014), the BEN has identified two sub-committees, one to work on a draft constitution and the other to develop a webpage. Due to lack of financial support, BEN hasn't been able to organize a full-fledged meeting of the network to initiate capacity need assessment activities. BEN also need more professional support and advice to strengthen its activities such as knowledge management, network development, leadership, need assessment and capacity development, fund raising etc.

- In **Fiji**, several past IFAD initiatives, namely, a regional grant on Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations program (MORDI) and a national grant to the Partnership in High Value Agriculture project (PHVA) identified successful lessons which this project can build on. MORDI worked with 32 communities (comprising 619 households and a target population of 3,447) and empowered several communities through Community Development Plans (CDPs); linking communities with policy and planning processes at all levels; and mobilizing partnership support for the implementation of CDP activities. The PHVA initiative was designed to build on the successes of MORDI and pave the way for an eventual lending programme in the country by piloting a small number of interventions to explore new approaches around community development and the commercialization of high-value fruits and vegetables. PHVA is being implemented by the Fijian NGO Partners for Community Development Foundation (PCDF) with two activity areas are: Production and Marketing of High Value Crops (Identification and formation of farmer groups, Training of farmers, Community facilitation and Establishment of a commercial seedling nursery); and Market Linkages and Facilitation (Market research, Value chain assessments, Market linkage activities and Pilot credit scheme). Since PHVA inception in March 2013, efforts have been made to link farmers effectively to markets and to market operators. Community facilitation activities have included the establishment of social/organization profiles, resource/group potential assessment, promotion of community awareness and understanding the project's goal, the activities, roles and responsibilities of participants in the project, the identification of interested and active farmers, and the formation and strengthening of farmer groups. Over 100 farmers have been profiled into a database and seven groups of about ten farmers have been formed

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[4] See footnotes 22 and 23.
[5] http://www.aesa-gfras.net/Resources/file/RS-eds-9-Sept-Extension%20Network%20Meeting%20minutes%20(1).pdf

and registered. Average land area per farmer is around two acres and they plant a wide range of vegetables including tomatoes, capsicums, lettuce and celery. About 100 farmers attended training on Vegetable Production Techniques and a further 96 farmers on Farm Business Management. SAAS project built on and scaled up the abovementioned IFAD initiatives in Fiji.

- In the **Philippines**, there were two projects[6] nearing completion where a post scenario situation shall be was taken care of by this project in preparation to their sustainability after the IFAD project funding ends. It shall draw lessons and capacitate extension service providers and implementers at all levels (individual, institutional, and policy environment) in having IFAD project gains institutionalized in the extension system in the local government units (LGUs) wherein extension and rural advisory services had been devolved under Republic Act 7061.

  The Agricultural Training Institute of the Department of Agriculture (ATI-DA) which has been a partner of IFAD project titled "Rapid Food Production Enhancement Program" through its former Director, Dr. Asterio P. Saliot expressed interest to collaborate with SEARCA in its activities under this grant. The Philippine Extension and Advisory Services Network (PhilEastNet (formerly Philippine Extension Network), a professional organization of extension professionals also indicated willingness to collaborate in the professionalization of extension under this project.

With these regional and country initiatives, SEARCA, an inter-government regional organization committed to support IFAD and APIRAS and its affiliates to carry out this project under a common interest of pursuing an inclusive and sustainable agriculture and rural development in Asia Pacific region.

Grant Goal and Objectives

The goal of the project was to empower poor smallholder farmers in Asia-Pacific Region (APR) through access to improved, more effective, and demand-driven agricultural advisory services (AAS). The grant sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Strengthen individual and organizational capacities of agricultural advisory service stakeholders in target countries and at regional and sub-regional level, which will directly benefit poor farmers, indigenous communities, and producers' organizations; and,
2. Facilitate the availability and accessibility of appropriate and up-to-date knowledge and evidence on innovative advisory services from a range of sources in the APR region (through country fora and through APIRAS) and worldwide (through GFRAS).

In relation to the above objectives, the project's expected outcomes are:

1. APIRAS, sub-regional networks, and national fora AAS institutions serve as effective coordinators and back stoppers of AAS actors and are used as repositories of best-fit innovative and demand-driven AAS and contribute to IFAD projects' objectives; and,
2. Pluralistic AAS stakeholders in the APR region adopt best-fit, climate smart, market-driven approaches that respond to knowledge, support, and service needs of smallholder farmers and are engaged in the exchange of knowledge and experience at national, regional, and global level.

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[6] Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Management Program, with the objective of reversing degradation of natural resources and development of watersheds; has a livelihood component for upland dwellers, particularly indigenous people. The second project is the Cordillera Highland Resources Management Program which covers 170 barangays in the Cordillera Region and will terminate in 2016. Its objective is agribusiness development and extension providers include LGUs state university in the Region (for thematic studies on root crops). This is implemented together with the Department of Agriculture.

As a result of capacity strengthening for policy dialogues, AAS are included in national and regional policies on agricultural and rural development and in strategies of education, research, the donor community, producer organizations, and civil society.

The direct target stakeholders included stakeholders working in and with AAS in Bangladesh, Fiji, and Philippines**:**

1. Regional and sub-regional AAS service providers from all public, private, and civil society sectors;
2. Farmer/producers' organizations as providers and clientele of AAS;
3. Public/private/civil society extension and AAS organizations in the project countries;
4. Higher education institutions providing education and research in AAS: They shall benefit from the knowledge management; and,
5. Local and national government units and policy makers.

Priority stakeholders involved in existing IFAD-funded projects in the three countries were primary stakeholders targeted, to ensure a post-project scenario of sustaining IFAD project gains and institutionalize them in appropriate national AAS institutions. Strengthening the capacity of extension professionals and other service providers as seen as critical in sustainability efforts towards these IFAD project gains among its major stakeholders (producers' organizations, farmers' associations, extensionists from the local and national government, NGOs, private sector, and higher education institutions) in terms of providing the soft technology (NGOs) and technical advice from subject matter specialists.

Indirect stakeholders included men and women farmers and youth and indigenous peoples in rural area of selected countries, as well as other actors in the agricultural systems along several value chains.

Grant Value, Approval, and Disbursement

Year 1 officially started on 6 June 2016 after the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and SEARCA. The total amount of grant is USD 1.2 Million. Closing date for the technical implementation of the SAAS project was on 30 June 2019. Grant completion date was originally scheduled on 31 December 2019 but was moved to 29 February 2020 to allow time for submission of final audit reports.

Gender Focus
Annotations
This section aims to assess the grant's ability to address gender/women's empowerment issues in line with IFAD's Framework for Gender Mainstreaming, including in M&E.

Under SAAS Component 1: Strengthening capacities of AAS to effectively serve the accessibility needs of smallholder farmers, the Project Document (ProDoc) explicitly provided instructions to "Identify demand-driven needs for AAS in specific countries by gender." This was clearly an attempt to develop project activities that would promote gender balance and address concerns relative to women empowerment. While there is no documentary evidence of adapting IFAD's Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in the SAAS Project, individual efforts reflected conscious efforts to integrate gender concerns in project activities. PhilEASNet, for example reported underscoring the importance of gender equality where both sexes were given equal opportunities to be represented, to join and be heard in the discussions, and participate in trainings and workshops (PhilEASNet's completion report). PhilEASNet's report further claimed that "starting with the implementers of this Project, women played an active role. The Project staff and partners consisted of 70 percent women. The

Project ensured that in its activities, women are included and not discriminated in opinions and knowledge sharing." (p. 5)

BAEN, on the other hand, reported that its Executive committee has 5 female Members out of its 25 Members. BAEN has 73 Female General Members out of its 590 Members. Out of 571 participants in all its learning events, a total of 102 (18%) female participated (8 Workshop, 5 Trainings and 2 policy dialogue) organized by BAEN. Trainers developed by BAEN are involved in providing further training and rural extension activities for small male and female farmers. Women were also involved in every activity of BAEN, like design, implementation, learning sharing, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

PIRAS and FAAS mentioned that gender mainstreaming was one of the priority areas identified from the capacity needs assessment (CNA) conducted for both organizations. To address this priority, PIRAS supported the development and piloting of a Participatory Community Based Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment Framework (PCVA) in Fiji and as well as in Tonga, Vanuatu, and Cook Islands. The framework employs a set of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools to assess vulnerability to climate change and other socio-economic issues affecting livelihoods and food and nutrition security of communities. A key aspect of the process is empowering communities to identify/design adaptation options for different gender groups – men, women and youth.

For PIRAS also, FAAS was structured to serve as a platform to support gender specific demand-driven needs for AAS. Currently, four females sit on the FAAS Steering Committee, providing a balance gender representation. **Table 1** shows the male, female and youth participation ration SAAS related activities in Fiji.

Table 1. Male, Female, and Youth Participation Ratio for SAAS-related activities in Fiji.

Activity Type	Country	Total Number	Participation (%)		
			Men	Women	Youth
FAAS Board Members	Fiji	37	52	8	3
Inception planning workshop	Fiji	*32*	*72*	*19*	*9*
PCVA & Seed Production Training	Fiji	100	51	22	27
PCVA & Seed Production Training	Vanuatu	40	35	40	25
PCVA & Seed Production Training	Tonga	44	54	23	23
PCVA & Seed Production Training	Cook Islands	44	44	40	16

PhilEASNet, on the other hand, reported underscoring the importance of gender equality where both sexes were given equal opportunities to be represented, to join and be heard in the discussions, and participate in trainings and workshops (PhilEASNet's completion report). PhilEASNet's report further claimed that "starting with the implementers of this Project, women played an active role. The Project staff and partners consisted of 70 percent women. The Project ensured that in its activities, women are included and not discriminated in opinions and knowledge sharing." (p. 5)

It is also worth disclosing that the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) of the Philippines where the project was piloted is a home of indigenous tribes that, by culture, accept gender equality and the importance of both sexes as partners in life. The people are open to the notion that both men and women should play active role in community development as well as in domestic activities.

In terms of the various SAAS activities conducted, the sex distribution of participants invited to attend were more or less balanced on the average, although in the actual conduct, women dominated as shown below in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Male, Female, and Youth Participation Ratio for SAAS-related activities in Philippines.

Activity	Participation (%)	
	Men	**Women**
Trainings (3)	38.33	61.67
Workshops (3)	44.33	55.67
Learning Events (3)	41.50	58.50
Orientation Activity (1)	38.00	62.00
Average%	**40.54%**	**59.46%**

The above discussions showed that SAAS activities was able to incorporate gender mainstreaming under the development activities that it supports and that is ensuring that "differentiated needs and priorities of rural women and men are identified and taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and, evaluation of all activities".[7]

Environment and Climate focus

Annotations
This section aims to assess the grant's ability to address environmental and climate change.

Agricultural productivity is heavily dependent on and is easily influenced by weather and climate. As such, smallholder farmers are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. During the SAAS implementation, climate change impacts emerged as one of the major challenges that AES providers and smallholder farmers wanted to address. As a response, either new modules on climate change were crafted or existing ones were enhanced to include climate-related concerns. Environment and climate became one of the cross-cutting themes across SAAS countries.

Under the SAAS project, climate related trainings and seminars were participated by BAEN staff to further broaden and update its knowledge on the said topics. Such trainings include - the "International Conference on Finalization & False Solutions Climate Smart Agriculture & Its Alternatives" and "Smart Agriculture, Smart Farmer", both conducted in 2017. More importantly, smallholder farmers in Bangladesh became more aware that climate change is a real threat, hence, BAEN formed a "Climate Change Adaptation Group" to specifically address concerns related to climate change. This group prepared a training Module on "Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture" and had its contents validated with their stakeholders through a pilot training. A total of 3,916 farmers are now familiar with climate change effect and are now equipped with basic knowledge on how to mitigate climate change impacts.

Specifically, BAEN prepared four (4) training modules after validation with Rural Advisory Service (RAS) Providers of different GOs and NGOs. The RAS providers are using the modules for further trainings to their own beneficiary farmers by using their own organizational funds. As per information provided by the RAS providers, the number of trainee farmers of i) Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture, and, ii) Gender & Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture are as follows:

Table 3. Number of farmer participants in SAAS-related trainings in Bangladesh.

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[7] Gender mainstreaming in IFAD10. International Fund for Agricultural Development. October 2016.

Name of training	No. of trainee farmers			% of trainee farmers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture	2,724	1,192	3,916	69.56	30.44	100
Gender & Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture	2,644	2,922	5,566	47.50	52.50	100

At the policy discussion level, AESA initiated a policy dialogue and consequently released a policy brief on the role of EAS in scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). AESA's Policy Brief discusses the issues of climate change and states that "Farmers need support to understand the impacts of climate change and adopt CSA practices. This would involve changes in the behaviour, strategies, and agricultural practices of millions of farmers worldwide. Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) have a crucial role to play in linking farmers with sources of new information and tools so that they can transition to CSA practices (Simpson and Burpee 2014). Moreover, only EAS have an explicit focus on supporting such change among rural communities."[8]

For PIRAS and FAAS, climate change is seen as a major threat to agricultural production and productivity and sustainable food systems for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). In fact, it is not just productivity and food systems that are under threats from climate change, the PICTs very own way of life and existence are threatened. They have been identified as the most vulnerable countries in the world. During the CNA that PIRAS conducted across the Pacific, there was a strong recognition on the important role of AAS in supporting communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Most countries participated in the CNA indicated that AAS need to be capacitated to effectively help communities to understand their vulnerabilities and determine adaptation options. Given the multifaceted problems of climate change, requires multi-sectoral approach to share tools and lessons to effectively support communities in building resilient farming systems. FAAS provides an excellent innovation platform for stakeholders to share information and jointly support build resilient communities in the Pacific.

As indicated above, one key aspect of the PCVA is to support extension and research practitioners to empower farmers to be able to assess their vulnerability and determine their adaptation options. The PCVA assesses climate change, livelihoods and food and nutrition security vulnerabilities and identifying adaptation options. With additional funding from the SPC PS4L program, thirteen climate resilient crop varieties were distributed to the target communities. Of the 13 accessions distributed, 5 kumala varieties are or orange flesh (high vitamin), and 6 varieties are drought resistant/tolerant (kumala - 3, banana-3), 3 salt tolerant varieties and 2 varieties are resistant/tolerant to Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race (FOCTR4). Five varieties of open pollinated seeds were also distributed and seed saving training were also provided to these communities.

In the Philippines, climate change impacts were raised during the review of the Farmer Business School (FBS) curriculum and modules of being promoted by another IFAD-supported project called Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project or CHARMP 2. The SAAS Project capitalized on the gains of the CHARMP 2, particularly on environmental conservation and climate change resilience. In agreement with key implementers of CHARMP 2, PhilEASNet, through SAAS, enhanced the FBS by integrating climate change resilience in the curriculum. The enhanced FBS became "Climate-Smart FBS for the Highlands (CSFBS)," a training manual which shall be offered specifically

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[8] Extension and Advisory Services in Scaling up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia: A Policy Brief. Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA), IRRI South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC), the Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP) and the Sri Lanka Network of Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (NAEASSL). June 2019

for the highland areas of the country. The enhanced training manual has integrated indigenous practices as measures to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Youth Focus

Annotations
This section aims to assess the grant's ability to address youth-related issues in line with the Rural Youth Action Plan, including in M&E.

To ensure youth participation, regional activities of SAAS project included representatives from Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD). Activities include Regional Workshop on Enhancing Food Security in Southeast Asia through Agricultural Training and Extension on 25 – 26 January 2018 in Jakarta, Indonesia; Best Practices in Agricultural Advisory Services in Asia and the Pacific Islands: A Regional Learning Event and Experience Sharing on 30 – 31 July 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand; and, the Supervision Missions in Bangladesh.

BAEN deliberately included a member of a local youth organizations, "Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)" in its Executive Committee. Young people are getting preferences in all the activities of BAEN. They are in fact observed as very active participants in learning events and in using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) applications for agricultural information.

The Fiji Ministry of Youth and Sports is an active member and strong advocate for youth during the FAAS deliberations. SAAS supported the documentation of the Rural Millionaire Programme (RMP) being promoted by the Fiji i-Taukei (indigenous Fijian) Affairs Board. The RMP, programme is a holistic approach to addressing the challenges of the youth in Fiji. The RMP was observed to have significantly changed the mind-set and approach of the youths to rural farming in the target villages. With proper advice and technical support that enabled the youth to contribute to rural farming in target villages. In addition, community-based trainings conducted jointly by the SAAS and PS4L team specifically targeted youth groups from various Agricultural Colleges in Tonga and Vanuatu. Such activities are important since youth unemployment in Fiji is estimated at 14.5%[9] of the total population and has been identified as an important economic issue that FAAS should also aim at addressing.

In the Philippines, aging farmers with no successor generation presents a major challenge to agriculture. The average age of Filipino farmers is 57 years old and the youth have low appreciation of agriculture as a career and job. This is aggravated by the fact that most parents encourage their children to take up careers other than agriculture. Even current farmers, due to difficulties they experience in farms, tend to move to other sources of living.

The SAAS Project in the Philippines capitalized on ATI's interventions for the farm youth and the gains of the CHARMP 2 on livelihood project implementation for the rural youth, women and indigenous people. Highlighting of the best practices of IFAD-funded projects worthy of emulation, CHARMP 2 in the case of the Philippines, was among the the concerns of the SAAS Project. The SAAS Project tried out two of CHARMP 2's best practices: Livelihood Project for the rural-based organizations in the community which included some youth and Training for indigenous peoples by the youth, to entice the farm youth to go into agriculture for their careers or as means of livelihood.

The Climate Smart Farmer Business School training is envisioned to help the young Filipino farmers in planning and implementing their strategies in farming and livelihood effectively. Although by intent, this CSFBS shall be an added intervention that extension workers can implement for the farmers to facilitate farming livelihood and business development, the farm

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[9] https://www.statista.com/statistics/811986/youth-unemployment-rate-in-fiji/

youth can also be trained as facilitators and become the extension workers' partners in the implementation of this CSFBS training to the farmers.

Also, along this concern, ATI has programs that seek to champion youth participation and involvement in agriculture and cultivate their interest in agricultural entrepreneurship as worthwhile opportunities for livelihood.

The SAAS Project took off from ATI's interventions for the farm youth and the gains of the CHARMP 2 on livelihood project implementation for the rural youth, women and indigenous people. Try-out of these best practices in two interventions for the farm youth was initiated by the ATI-CAR; the livelihood project for the rural-based organizations which included some youth and training for indigenous people by the youth was implemented by ATI-CAR in partnership with PhilEASNet-CAR Chapter to entice these farm youth to go into agriculture as means of livelihood.

Although the youth sector was included throughout the SAAS project through their participation in previous SAAS activities, it could be noted that the number and frequency of their participation was low. To continue to encourage their involvement in the agriculture sector, it would be better to prioritize their participation by giving them more slots in meetings, and other capacity building activities and incorporate some of their insights.

Nutrition focus
This section aims to assess the grant's ability to address nutritional issues of beneficiaries.

FAO data show that rates of malnutrition in Bangladesh are among the highest in the world. More than 54% of preschool-age children, equivalent to more than 9.5 million children, are stunted, 56% are underweight and more than 17% are wasted[10]. In the Philippines, About 4 million (31.8%) of the preschool population were found to be underweight-for-age, 3 million (19.8%) adolescents and 5 million (13.2%) adults, including older persons were found to be underweight and chronically energy deficient, respectively.[11] FAAS, on the other hand, noted that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including, diabetes, heart disease and micronutrient deficiencies is a significant concern for the PICTs with unhealthy diet being the highest risk factor for cardiovascular and diabetes induced deaths in the Pacific . In addition, NCD is a multidimensional problem with many direct and underlying causes. As such, a systemic approach is necessary to coordinate and streamline between sectors and ministries for sustained impact on nutrition outcomes and NCD crisis in the Pacific. In the Philippines, About 4 million (31.8%) of the preschool population were found to be underweight-for-age, 3 million (19.8%) adolescents and 5 million (13.2%) adults, including older persons were found to be underweight and chronically energy deficient, respectively.[12]

To address these nutrition gaps, BAEN implemented a pilot training on "Gender and Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture" where Extension Service Providers were trained to providing nutrition and gender training to their community partners. It was through this training that the extension workers provided information on basic nutrient requirements for children, adolescent girls, male and female family members. Communities were taught to produce their food with nutrients from their homes and farms. BAEN members like Social Development Initiatives (SDI, an NGO located at Dhamrai, Dhaka) is producing safe food especially vegetables and fruits and they are engaged with the development of vegetable value chain. They also developed honey value chain by their beneficiaries. Bangladesh Association of Social Advancement (BASA, an NGO located at Tangail) is also doing similar activities. With

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[10] http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/bgd_en.stm
[11] http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/phl_en.stm
[12] http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/phl_en.stm

reference to **Table 3** above, a total of 5,566 farmers benefitted from the "Gender and Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture" training.

On the other hand, FAAS prioritized mainstreaming of food and nutrition security as key areas for collaboration. FAAS, through SAAS led exploring innovative ways to promote coordination between officials in the agriculture, health, and community development sectors. The SAAS PCVA pilot trainings also involved assessing, livelihoods and food and nutrition security issues that contribute to the vulnerability of households. Further, through the community trainings, orange flesh (high vitamin) 5 kumala (sweet potato) varieties were promoted to the pilot communities in Fiji. The same activity was also scaled out to Vanuatu, Tonga, and Cook Islands through partnership with the SPC Pacific Seeds for Life programme, a project developed to complement SAAS. While it is too early to provide comprehensive evidence of SAAS' impact on improving nutrition of target beneficiaries, availability of and access to different nutrient-rich food crops contributes increasing household dietary diversity. The project (SAAS) also supported the documentation and promotion of seven varieties of highly nutritional underutilised indigenous leafy vegetables.

For Philippines, PhilEASNet integrated the concerns for nutrition in the CSFBS and in key interventions related to gender and youth.

Linkages (to investment portfolio and other development initiatives)
Annotations
This section will should explain how the grant's linkages to the wider investment portfolio, both within a given country and more broadly, have been elaborated. The contribution of the grant to the realisation of specific country programme objectives and to broader development initiatives should be considered, as well as the extent to which the grant has contributed to the realisation of objectives of other development projects.

SAAS activities in Bangladesh have very strong linkage with two IFAD-funded projects of Bangladesh: 1) Promoting Agricultural Commercialization and Enterprises (PACE), and 2) National Agricultural Technology Program – Phase II (NATP-2). BAEN member Palli Karma Shayak Foundation (PKSF, an Apex body of Bangladesh NGOs) is implementing PACE project in Bangladesh through its Partner Organizations (POs, NGOs). The NATP has four major components: 1) BARC part (Research activities by involving research and educational organizations, 2) DAE part (Extension of crop sector), 3) DLS part (extension of livestock sector), and 4) DOF part (extension of fisheries part). SAAS activities under BAEN were strongly linked with the above-mentioned initiatives. In most cases, participants from these activities also took active part in the BAEN learning events.

In Fiji, the establishment of FAAS provided the platform for all stakeholders to work in a more coordinated and cohesive manner in supporting the 2020 Agenda, the Fiji Agriculture Policy Framework which aims to establish a diversified economically and environmentally sustainable economy in Fiji. In addition, the IFAD funded Fiji Agricultural Partnership Project (FAPP) has been part of the FAAS forums in sharing lessons and contributing to FAAS priority direction setting. SAAS supported the documentation of the FAPP project lessons which is now incorporated into MOA extension service programmes.

The Fiji Development Bank (FDB) supported Agriculture initiatives through a signed memorandum of understanding, on the implementation of component 2 of the APP, on matching grant support of SMEs. It provides incentive schemes to existing agribusiness small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are willing to invest in expanding business with small scale farmers, particularly those in the highland target area. The aim is to promote market-oriented agricultural production by farmers in remote rural areas and of encouraging the use of banking services by those working in the field of agriculture. This work is surely in line with

FAPP project objective to coordinate/build on public and private sector partnership to create an enabling environment where agri business can flourish.This partnership was made possible due to membership in FAAS and by participating in its events.

The implementation of SAAS activities successfully mobilised additional resources and partners from various initiatives and projects within SPC LRD and beyond to support scaling up activities in other countries and communities in Fiji. DFAT/IFAD co-funded the PIRAS Forum in 2017 which enabled participation of additional countries and partners in the CAN process. The various trainings conducted in Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and Cook Islands were co-funded by the SPC Pacific Seed for Life Programme (PS4L) which was developed to complement the SAAS. In the Cook Islands, activities were co-funded by the IFAD-CBRAP implemented by SPC

In the Philippines, the SAAS Project partnered with the ATI which is the Philippines' Department of Agriculture lead agency for Extension Services. The ATI has regular budget allocation from the government that support extension activities as a regular activity directly implemented or in partnership with other extension service providers. Leveraging IFAD resources, SAAS was able to mobilize PhP395,000.00 or approximately USD7,596.00 from ATI-CAR, as direct cost, particularly in the conduct of a learning event and the capability building interventions and try-out. It also provided the travelling expenses of the staff involved in the various activities, transportation including fuel. Partnership/linkages with PhilEASNet-CAR, the CHARMP 2 and the local government units (LGUs) involved in the SAAS Project also augmented manpower either as resource persons, facilitators, administrative support including their traveling expenses; venues for training and other related activities of the Project were also provided as contribution in kind.

While linkages with other investments in specific SAAS CF and SRNs, no linkages were made at the regional level.

Project Performance by Component
Annotations:
Describe the progress and performance of the grant by project component, and including a review of the main activities performed and outputs delivered. Attention should be given to specific targets mentioned in the logical framework with respect to gender or marginalised groups.

Activity 1. Undertake capacity needs assessment and strengthening of country fora and sub-regional networks while strengthening governance of regional and country-level AAS institutions

Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) sustained the momentum ignited in the 1st stakeholder workshops in Bangladesh and Philippines, respectively, through regular consultations with the CF members, especially in the development of modules for the learning events. Each host institution led the validation of CF priority directions with CF members.

Project activities were delayed in Fiji due to administrative changes in SPC. The Fiji project inception meeting was conducted on 17 - 18 August 2017 where they established the Fiji Country Forum, conducted an initial capacity needs assessment, and identified the CF's priority directions for capacity development, knowledge management, and policy initiatives. The project utilized the previous capacity needs assessments done by the Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (PIRAS) in order to accelerate CF formation and direction setting in Fiji.

The results from each country's stakeholder workshops were circulated among participants. CF members are the dedicated target audience for the knowledge hub being developed under Activity 3.

The NSCs of each country developed action plans to support IFAD country programs, in connection to each CF's priority directions.

Sub-regional capacity needs assessment

Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA) implemented the suggestions derived from their online capacity needs assessment on AAS in South Asia and the AESA Governance Review Meeting, which include: a) enhancing recognition of AESA and country fora at the national level; b) addressing funding issues; and c) strengthening linkages beyond country focal points.

APIRAS and PIRAS completed their assessments on AAS in Southeast Asia and the Pacific during Year 2 of project implementation. Each sub-regional network utilized the results of their online assessment to set their priority directions and prepare an action agenda, in line with the SAAS Project that guided their subsequent plans for knowledge management, policy engagement, and resource mobilization.

APIRAS also initiated the formation of a Southeast Asian Network for Rural Advisory Services (SEA4RAS) and prepared a project proposal to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Sectoral Working Group on Agriculture Training and Extension (AWGATE) for possible collaborative undertaking.

Activity 2. Improve individual capacities of AAS to effectively serve poor farmers, indigenous communities, and producers' organizations; respond to their demands and ensure sustainability of project gains, as well as future geographic scaling-up

BAEN, SPC/ PIRAS, and ATI/ PhilEASNet developed all modules for their learning events by December 2017, incorporating the good practice notes developed under Activity 3. BAEN, SPC/ PIRAS, and ATI/ PhilEASNet worked with IFAD – NATP and PACE, and IFAD-FAPP, and IFAD-CHARMP2, respectively, to prepare plans for the sustained implementation of learning modules developed under the project and to demonstrate the actual effects of innovative extension approaches.

The sub-regional networks also assisted in the design of the modules and implementation of learning events.

In response to the needs identified during the assessments, APIRAS organized a workshop with the sub-regional networks to discuss the governance structure of APIRAS. Representatives from other more established regional AAS networks were also invited to the workshop to share their experiences.

Activity 3. Develop a regional portal/hub as repository of information including innovative practices from APIRAS sister networks, along with a knowledge management strategy

APIRAS implemented its KM strategy for the regional network and specific to the SAAS project. All implementing partners also developed KM strategies for their respective countries and sub-regions. Knowledge hubs of APIRAS, AESA, BAEN, PIRAS, and the PhilEASNet were set-up already but are still being further developed. PIRAS assisted in the formation of a Fiji CF and helped them establish their own knowledge hub.

APIRAS developed a directory of AAS experts, practitioners, and beneficiaries in the region.

SEARCA and APIRAS, in consultation with the NSCs and sub-regional networks, agreed on the guidelines for developing good practice notes. Each host institution, with support from the sub-regional networks, has identified innovative extension approaches in their countries and sub-regions and trained country-level preparers on how to document and analyze said approaches and write at least 3 good practice notes. The knowledge products developed and published in the knowledge hubs of all project partners under Activity 3 were shared during the "Workshop on the Development of Knowledge Management Strategy to Promote AAS in the Asia Pacific Region" learning event.

The following table presents the full SAAS Project accomplishment and outputs based on targets set in the Grant Agreement and based on the results framework which guided the crafting of annual targets and determination of accomplishments. The details of accomplishments of partner institutions namely, BAEN, SPC/ PIRAS, DA-ATI /PhilEasNet, and, APIRAS are presented in **Annexes A**, **B**, **C**, and, **D**, respectively. In addition, the Knowledge Management and MEALS Plan of SAAS are attached as **Annexes E** and **F**, respectively.

Table 4. SAAS Project Accomplishment and Outputs.

	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
1.	**Undertake establishment and capacity assessment of country fora as well as of sub-regional networks and APIRAS to strengthen governance of AAS institutions**		
	Conduct country situation analysis of AAS, building on available assessments and supplemental primary information		
a	*Country forum formed with institutional set-up*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Synthesis of situation analysis, capacity needs assessment, and CF priority directions (from the 1st CF consultation) packaged and circulated among CF members in Bangladesh and Philippines in **September 2017** • ATI opted to work with PhilEASNet as the CF for the Philippines • FAAS established in Fiji in **September 2017** • Business plan for the CF completed and started implementation in **June 2018**
b	*Country forum's priority directions established*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• CF priority directions were established in Bangladesh and Philippines during 1st CF consultations • Fiji CF priority directions developed in **September 2017**
c	*Synergy plans with IFAD country initiatives*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS, SEARCA	• Consensus reached between SAAS country teams and IFAD country programs during Year 1 is translated into completed specific joint activities as cited in Activity 2, 3 and 4 below • PhilEASNet entered into partnership with CHARMP and has developed 5 learning events concept notes • BAEN established partnership and working relationship with PACE and NATP
d	*Annual Country Forum learning and planning session*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Year-end project review, assessment of lessons learned, and CF planning session completed in June 2018 • FAAS 2nd meeting held in July and agreed on next steps leading to organizational strengthening • PIRAS Board Meeting met in July 2018 and re-organised its governance and discussed priority areas over the next 2 years
1.2	**Capacity assessment of the regional network (PIRAS/AESA/APIRAS)**		
a	*Capacity assessment of regional/sub-regional networks completed*	**APIRAS, AESA, PIRAS**	• Online capacity needs assessment of APIRAS, AESA, and PIRAS completed in **September 2017** • APIRAS caused the following:

	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
			➤ Development of a TOR for a consultant to undertake Capacity Development design, plans and programs; approved and endorsed by ISC; submitted to PMO for action ➤ Facilitated a learning event, Capacity Building Plan as a consequence of the Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) by Kevan Lamm. This was done as a side event during the GFRAS annual meeting in South Korea, October 2018. • Consolidation and analysis of all CNA results on **December 2017** • CNA of RASSEA completed in **March 2018** • SEARAS (network to be formed in **June 2018**. It completed its registration as a legal entity with support coming from APIRAS
b	*Capacity building action plan for regional/sub-regional network*	**APIRAS, AESA, PIRAS**	• Capacity Building Action plan, as mentioned above, was presented by Dr. Kevin Lamm during a side event in the GFRAS meeting in Korea in October 2018. The plan was not adopted by the ISC with the impression that it was too academic and would not be feasible given the current circumstances of extension workers who need to continue working in their respective assignments
2	**Improve individual capacities of AAS to effectively serve smallholder farmers and respond to their demands**		
2.1	**Undertake AAS capacity needs assessment exercises through the country fora and development of long-term AAS provider capacity development strategy to address the capacity gaps**		
a	*Capacity assessment of human resources of various types of AAS institutions*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Capacity needs assessment in Fiji completed in **September 2017** • For Bangladesh and Philippines, the results of the CAN were already integrated Output from Activity 1.1. - Synthesis of situation analysis, capacity needs assessment and CF priority directions. This was completed on **24 January 2018**
b	*Capacity building strategy and agenda of learning events, including curriculum for learning modules*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS**	• Agenda of learning events* that reflect priority issues, including IFAD projects concerns, is firmed up and curricula for learning modules for Year 2 learning events are developed by **December 2017** • ATI has prepared agenda of 5 learning events together with CHARMP 2
c	*Assistance to pilot AAS institution in developing plan for the implementation of innovative extension practices*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Action plans mainstreaming AAS innovations into its core programs developed by ATI and PIRAS • FAAS' advisory models and good practices shared in July 2018 and 2 practices selected for scaling (RAS delivery linking in traditional structures – a farmer extension led model and market led community mobilization supported by IFAD-Fiji FAPP • ATI/PhilEASNet, in partnership with CHARMP pursued this through the Farm Business School which eventually became the Climate Smart Farm Business School (CSFBS) with SAAS incorporating climate smart agriculture into existing CHARMP FBS modules.
2.2	**Address the capacity needs of AAS actors through capacity strengthening events (trainings, learning routes, peer-to-peer coaching, etc.)**		
a	*First country learning event conducted with*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Service provider* for 1st learning module of each country identified and engaged in December 2017

	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
	support of KM products from Component 3		• ATI and PhilEASNet designed a training on Community-Based Participatory Extension Management in response to need expressed by the IFAD Country CHARM Project in the Cordillera Region; • ATI and PhilEASNet assisted in planning Extension Policy forum for LGUs • Regional Governance Workshop for APIRAS conducted on 22 – 23 January 2018 • AESA conducted a Training on the New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK) on10 March 2018 and on Writing Good Practice Notes on Extension and Advisory Services on 11 March 2018 • SPC hired 2 consultants to identify, prioritize and develop learning modules
b	*Other intermittent learning events completed*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Training workshops on strengthening research and evaluation in extension for AESA • For PhilEASNet, a) Monitoring & Evaluation – Development of a standard M & E system; ensure adequate allocation; training on M & E (c/o AFC & DA), b) Business Plan preparation – training/workshop (c/o ATI, DA), c) Training on crop production, livestock raising, food processing, organic farming, managerial skills (c/o DA-RFO, ATI), d) Market matching, linkage and networking (c/o DA-AMAD, ATI, LGU and NGO • For BAEN, additional learning events included a) Agricultural Extension Approaches and Experience Sharing, b) Presentation and Experience Sharing Workshop on Good practices /approaches, c) Agricultural Extension Approaches and Experience Sharing, d) Planning and Consultation Workshop for Capacity Assessment of Country For a, e) Extension approach presentation and lesson sharing workshop, f) New Extension Learning kit & writing Good practice noted in Extension • PIRAS/FAAS – a) Training on Participatory Community Based Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment Framework (PCVA), b) Value Chain Training, c) PARA VET trainings
c	*Learning event modules assessed with sustainability plans*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS	• Assessment conducted of 1st batch of learning modules by **June 2018**
3	**Development of knowledge management hub, along with KM strategy**		
3.1	**Development of knowledge management strategy**		
a	KM assessment and strategy	**APIRAS, SEARCA** BAEN/SPC/ATI AESA/PIRAS	• Regional KM specialist engaged and KM strategy developed • Regional KM Operational Guidelines produced by the PMO • KM assessment, covering IFAD field project concerns and targeted improvements of key knowledge hubs, completed for Fiji, Bangladesh, Philippines, AESA, PIRAS, and APIRAS done in **January 24, 2018**

	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
			• Final Documentation: Knowledge Management Strategy, produced by Dr. Alexander G. Flor, Consultant on Knowledge Management Strategist for SAAS
b	*Knowledge hubs established/strengthened*	**APIRAS, SEARCA** BAEN/SPC/ATI AESA/PIRAS	• Knowledge hub of CFs, SRNs, enhanced • APIRAS knowledge hub fully operational and currently under management by AESA for APIRAS • BAEN has developed its own website with the help of a consultant and training of SAAS project staff and 50 other users from various agencies • SPC developed PAIS supported by EU/SPC FAPP initially as e-library facility but will be expanded in functionality • PhilEASNet's website embedded in ATI's site. • All partner websites are fully functional and are continuously being improved beyond SAAS Project life.
c	*Development of APIRAS MEAL*	**APIRAS,** AESA, PIRAS, SEARCA	• 2nd Iteration of the SAAS Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Plan submitted by Dr. Patrice Djamen.
3.2	**Region-wide AAS event**		
a	*Asia-wide AAS learning event*	**SEARCA, APIRAS** BAEN/SPC/ATI AESA/PIRAS GFRAS	• Discussion of CNA results as facilitated by Dr. Kevin Lamm • Discussion of Capacity-building plan for APIRAS Network • Best practices in Agricultural Advisory Services in Asia and the Pacific Islands: A Regional Learning Event and Experience Sharing • Participation in GFRAS meeting in October 2018 • Regional Workshop on KM and MEALS • Steering Committee Meetings • SAAS Close-out meeting where results of external evaluation was presented
b	*Initial agreements with potential donors for project development and collaboration*	**SEARCA, APIRAS** BAEN/SPC/ATI AESA/PIRAS GFRAS	• Signed agreement with AFACI, conducted intial discussions with DA-BAR on research on extension; initial discussion with Usec for Marketing; and initial discussion with ILRI • PIRAS jointly with SPC has developed a new programme known as Pacific Seed for Life (PS4L) with one key result is strengthening linkages between RAS, research and other AAS • APIRAS attended the "International Collaborative Project Development Workshop" in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2018 (supported by IFAD)
3.3	**Implementation of KM Strategy**		
a	*Knowledge products shared through hubs*	**APIRAS** AESA/PIRAS BAEN/SPC/ATI SEARCA, GFRAS	• Existing knowledge products (including GFRAS materials) and Good Practice Notes are shared through the existing or newly established knowledge hubs and used in the learning events under Activity 2 and the regional learning event under Activity 3.2 • Websites of SAAS Partners are already online and accessible to the whole network and to global communities
b	*Sustainability plans for strategic hosting*	**APIRAS** AESA/PIRAS BAEN/SPC/ATI	• Negotiations for hosting arrangement with IRRI initiated but not completed due to non-availability of funds from other sources and limitation of funds from LMP to support APIRAS secretariat.

	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
3.4	**Elaboration of best-fit approaches**		
a	*Guidance on process for Identification and preparation of Good Practice Notes building on GFRAS experience*	**APIRAS, SEARCA** AESA/PIRAS BAEN/SPC/ATI GFRAS	Immediate guidance provided to partners on the process for identification and different levels of documentation of Good practices based on GFRAS guide (*GP criteria in* **January 2018** *c/o AESA)* - Descriptive list of candidate relevant good practices (including from IFAD project sites) developed plus compilation of matching existing literature for immediate use in learning events and initial policy dialogues. - APIRAS started compilation and examination of various guidelines for screening out good practices including the FAO guidelines and NELK as potential basis for good practice assessment - BAEN has published 3 Good Practice Notes - SPC inventoried and compiling good practices - ATI started compilation of potential good practices from CHARMP and other sources
b	*Three (3) good practice notes developed (1 per country) and disseminated*	**AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS** BAEN/SPC/ATI	- PhilEASNet completed 7 good practice notes - PIRAS/FAAS produced 4 Good Agricultural Practice Notes which were disseminated to FAAS and PIRAS members. The same notes were promoted/scaled to 2 Provinces in Fiji using the PCVA approach with co-funding from the PS4L
c	*Seven (7) good practice notes developed and disseminated*	**AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS** BAEN/SPC/ATI	- PIRAS/FAAS also produced 13 factsheets on nutritional value of underutilised indigenous leafy vegetables were developed and promoted to PICTs - BAEN on the other hand produced 7 Good Practice Notes published and currently available in their website - Other outputs: Kyrgyztan (CAC-FRAS) – 2 South Korea (RDA) – 2 India (AESA) – 2 Lao PDR (MELA) – 1 Vietnam (MELA) – 1 Indonesia (SEARAS) – 1 Australia (APEN) – 1
d	*Six (6) country-level preparers (2 per country) are capacitated to sustain development of good practice notes*	**AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS** BAEN/SPC/ATI	- Members of the CFs were trained and requested to support the documentation of good practices **BAEN has conducted workshop on writing good practice notes on EAS with AESA**
e.	*Outcome Documentation from three (3) countries[13]*	BAEN, FAAS and PhilEASNet	A consolidated Outcome Document consolidating case studies from Bangladesh, Fiji, and Philippines
4	**Policy Engagement in high level policy dialogue at national and regional levels**		
4.1	**Hold policy dialogue on AAS at national and sub-regional and regional levels as part of long term process**		
	Strengthening of the governance structure of APIRAS	**APIRAS, SEARCA**	- Conducted its governance workshop on 22 – 23 January 2018 - Drafted proceedings of governance workshop finalized and submitted to SEARCA on 22 February 2018 - Interim Steering Committee organized - Charter completed by Writing Team and ratified by members of the Interim Steering Committee

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[13] Documentation of Outcomes was a decision made during the SAAS Project Close-out meeting held at SEARCA from November 13-14, 2019.

	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
			• Formal launching of APIRAS under the new charter done on 31 July 2018) • Hired a Project Assistant as member of the Secretariat
		APIRAS, SEARCA	• Charter of APIRAS ratified during its launch on July 31, 2018. This accomplishment was a result of forming a team to draft the Charter, designating individuals to do the leg work and coordination via different channels including emails, skype meetings, and text messages.
		APIRAS, SEARCA	
		APIRAS Interim Board	
		APIRAS and Subregional Networks	
a	*Identification of key policy gaps and priority policy reform targets*	**BAEN/SPC/ATI** AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS SEARCA	• BAEN able to organize 2 policy dialogues: 1) "Strengthening Coordinated Advisory Services for Sustainable Agriculture in Bangladesh" and 2) "Improvement of Agricultural Extension & Information System Curricula of Universities and Training Modules of Extension Service Providers of Bangladesh"
b	*Analysis of policy needs using evidence completed*	**AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS** SEARCA	• For PIRAS and FAAS, Pacific agricultural and AAS policies reviewed and AAS policy gaps identified; Policy and advocacy support for AAS in the Pacific and in Fiji
c	*Discussions with key champions*	**AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS** SEARCA	• For PhilEASNet, policy work focused on three major priorities: 1) Prioritizing Agriculture: Its Right Place in the Seal of Good Local Governance, 2) Adoption of the New Extensionist concept (New Extensionist Learning Kit-NELK) in the formal and non-formal education system of the country, and 3) Declaration of Extension Month
d	*Policy dialogue using evidence*	**AESA, PIRAS, APIRAS** SEARCA	• AESA organized a South Asia Policy Dialogue focusing on Role of EAS in Scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture • At the regional level, a policy paper focusing on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on EAS was prepared with the help of individual consultants from Bangladesh, Fiji, and Philippines • Planned regional policy dialogue was called-off by the APIRAS Steering Committee due to the very limited time to prepare, invite resource persons and participants, and make a thorough review of the policy paper for an APIRAS-wide buy-in
5	**Project Coordination**		
a	*Work and Financial Plans*	**SEARCA,** ALL ACTORS	• Annual Work and Financial Plans for the 1st and 2nd year of implementation submitted and approved by IFAD; • AWPB for the final year went through several revisions due to new decisions made by the APIRAS SC, IFAD and SEARCA.
b	*Strengthen project monitoring and evaluation system*	**SEARCA,** APIRAS	• The project used its Results Framework as its main guide for monitoring and reporting; • MEALS plan belatedly prepared and the latest iteration was submitted by Dr. Patrice Djamen in January 2019. • Engaged 3 project coordinators within the 3-year timeframe of the project: 1) Ed Queblatin, 2) Dr. Rex Cruz, and 3) Glen de Castro
c	*IFAD supervision Mission*	**SEARCA,** APIRAS	• IFAD completed 3 Supervision Missions during the project life: 1. Philippines 2. Bangladesh 3. Fiji

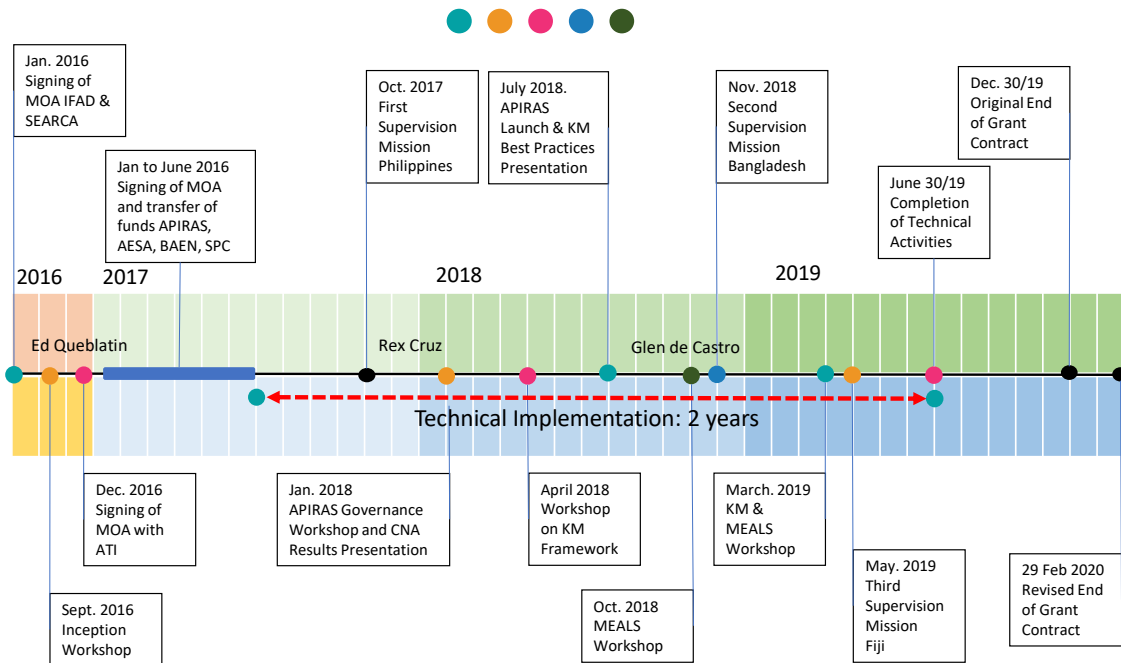|	Activity/Sub-Activity/Outputs	KEY ACTORS (first Actor cited is the Lead Actor)	ACCOMPLISHMENT/OUTPUTS (unless cited, each output to be done in each focal country)
			The supervision missions provided intervention and facilitated decisions in light of real challenges of the project, especially in the areas of knowledge management and monitoring. During the supervision mission in Fiji, APIRAS, IFAD and the PMO worked with the PIRAS and FAAS in developing a sustainability plan.
d.	*Conduct of External Evaluation*	**APIRAS, SEARCA, IFAD**	• Dr. Sanne Chipeta was contracted to conduct the External Evaluation for SAAS. • Banglades and Philippines were the only country visited given the timeframe and resources available. • Unfortunately, due to conflicting time and schedule, the planned Skype meetings and key informant interviews with PIRAS/FAAS stakeholders did not happen • Final report of the External Evaluation was submitted by Dr. Chipeta on December 20, 2019.
e.	*Close-out Meeting*	**APIRAS, SEARCA, IFAD**	• Close-out meeting of the SAAS project was held on November 13-14, 2019, at the SEARCA Headquarters, Los Banos, Laguna, Philippines • A total of 16 core participants attended the meetings in addition to some SEARCA staff who joined the meeting during relevant presentations like the financials and other management concerns. Note: Despite efforts to invite them, no representatives from either PIRAS or FAAS were able to participate in the close out meeting.

Implementation Arrangements

Annotations:
Describe implementation arrangements, including IFAD supervision and implementation support.
If applicable, also include changes in the grant implementation context, grant design and/or outreach, describing adjustments being made in response to the challenges encountered.

Figure 2. IFAD – SAAS Timeline

The SAAS Project was designed to be implemented in three years. The preparatory work and winding down processes however required a year of completion, leaving only two years to implement the technical and on-the-ground activities of the project. The initial months focused on understanding the circumstances and building the capacity of the member networks and country fora, including the acquisition of very basic legal requirements like registration and opening of bank accounts. The capacity needs assessment sought to understand the competencies required by the networks and consequently developed a capacity building plan that guided the development of the organizations involved in SAAS. Country fora were strengthened based on their expressed capacity-building needs that ranged from technical capacities to provide appropriate AAS, capacity to engage their stakeholders, and capacity to manage the CFs themselves through improved governance, robust knowledge management, monitoring, and communications systems, effective policy work, and viable resource mobilization APIRAS, the regional network anticipated to be the consolidating framework of the regional efforts worked on its own capacities as well, defining its charter and its structure and initially getting support for its start-up stage.

From there, priorities expanded from laying down the framework for an improved and strengthened agricultural advisory services to ensuring that accomplishments are captured and sustained. The IFAD supervision mission in Bangladesh surfaced the need for stronger

KM, monitoring and communications in November 2018. There was an urgent need to capture the emerging lessons and best practices. It was deemed urgent to have appropriate metrics to measure project accomplishments in light of its defined goals, objectives and activities and then capture, process and share through a robust knowledge management system that can provide on-demand access to knowledge to smallholder farmers in the region and its other stakeholders across the globe.

Consequently, decision to re-direct resources to cover expenses related to enhancing KM, M&E, and communications. CFs and SRNs were asked to identify their urgent needs and submit their request to SEARCA. SEARCA on their part, re-adjusted the approved AWPB and submitted a modified version to IFAD, considering the new demands and requirements of the networks.

During the close-out meeting in November 2019, CF reports indicated potential impacts on the ground. BAEN told a story of how trainers' training radiated across local communities, allowing wider dissemination of knowledge. PhilEASNet on the other hand showed a promise of synergy with CHARMP2 where the former's climate smart agriculture enhanced the latter's Business to Farm Module to become a more complete approach to sustainable agriculture. Getting a glimpse of these potential impacts, APIRAS and its members, together with IFAD and SEARCA, decided to undertake case documentation. This decision necessitated a new adjustment to the schedule and budget of the project. Budgets were reallocated and IFAD, together with SEARCA, decided to adjust the grant completion date from December 31, 2019 to February 29, 2020. The new timeframe would allow IFAD to review and comment on the completion and audit reports and for SEARCA to submit a final set of reports incorporating IFAD comments and recommendations.

Innovation
Annotations:
IFAD interventions are expected to innovate, by exploring methodologies, institutional arrangements or technologies that are either completely new or new in the context in which they are applied. This section should outline the elements of innovation introduced by the grant and describe how they are being implemented.
What innovations sprung from the implementation of the SAAS Project?

Innovation for BAEN came through broadening its knowledge base by forming five (5) Working Groups for capacity development strategy formulation and implementing it for the CF and AAS providers in Bangladesh. Four of the Working Groups conducted several meetings, identified learning events (Trainings) and made Training Modules which were validated after conducting Pilot Trainings by taking Trainees from Advisory Service Providers of IFAD funded "Promoting Agricultural Commercialization and Enterprises (PACE)" project, IFAD funded "National Agricultural Technology Program (NATP)", YPARD, and other Government and Non-government organizations. Trainees of these pilot trainings became trainers themselves and took the lead in building the capacities of their beneficiaries like rural small farmers including women and youth using Training Modules developed by BAEN. It is expected that Extension service providers of other organizations (GO, NGOs and Private) will use these modules to improve the quality of front and middle level extension workers as well as the farmers of Bangladesh.

The group on "Curricula review" worked to further mainstream extension work into formal education and made a review and recommendations the following systems: i) Undergraduate Course Curricula of Agriculture Extension & Information System discipline of Different Universities and ii) Training Modules of Extension Service Providers of Bangladesh. After reviewing of these, a policy dialogue on "Improvement of Agricultural Extension & Information System Curricula of Universities and Training Modules of Extension Service Providers of Bangladesh" was conducted at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka on 18 June

2019. The most important decisions of the policy dialogue were: i) Course credit of Agricultural Extension & Information System should be similar for undergraduate level of all the Agricultural Educational Programs of all the Universities of Bangladesh; ii) A course of 3 credit (theory 2 and practical-1) as "Agricultural Information System", "Livestock Information System" and "Fisheries Information System" should be included in the undergraduate programs of crop, livestock and fisheries respectively. Internship program should be included for all the agricultural undergraduate programs.

Another innovation from BAEN came through when it organized a policy dialogue on "Strengthening Coordinated Advisory Services for Sustainable Agriculture in Bangladesh". Major decision of this policy dialogue was for BAEN to lead the coordination for strengthening Agricultural Advisory Services in Bangladesh by empowering National Agricultural Extension System (NAES). BAEN documented all these innovations as part of their good practice notes and published it in their website.

In Fiji, the successful establishment of FAAS is an innovation in itself. FAAS became a powerful platform in the coming together of AAS providers and working for a common goal of improving the lives of smallholder farmers. This innovation started in sensitisation of a wide range of stakeholders on the policy mandates aligned to the concept of country platform. The Fiji 2020 Policy Agenda mandates establishment of an Agricultural Advisory Council to provide advisory support to MOA which has not been realised. This allowed both public and non-public service providers agreeing to the establishment of FAAS and jointly developed the direction of FAAS and embedding the policy directives in the FAAS strategic Framework. It also allows FAAS to advocate to Fiji MOA on the need to provide Secretariat functions and other resources needed to sustain FAAS beyond SAAS.

With climate change and food and nutrition security identified as important priorities for all PICTs, it is important to properly define the role and specific needs of AAS to effectively support climate change and food and nutrition security needs of communities. Through the PIRAS capacity needs assessment in 2017, it was identified that although AAS play vital role, most AAS service providers' need the necessary tools be able to effectively meet these demands. in response, PIRAS jointly with SPC, developed the PS4L to support strengthen the capacity of stakeholders including AAS related to enable the availability and access to diverse portfolio of seeds necessary to build resilient farming systems and to support food nutrition security outcomes. In 2018, through partnership with the SPC PS4L, a regional policy dialogue was organised on: strengthening the role of research and extension in climate change adaptation. As result of the dialogue, a new regional Roadmap on Seed Systems was developed articulating a systems approach to climate change adaptation with key capacity building needs and linkages to PIRAS was developed. Through the joint implementation process enabled farming communities to have access to resilient and nutritional crop varieties and support scale out activities in other countries.

For PhilEASNet, Innovation took the form of development of extension delivery training programs with appropriate curriculum for each type and level of clientele – AAS providers' level and farmers' level – as a direct consequence of mainstreaming the NELK modules in its training programs.Added to this was the strategy undertaken by ATI-CO CDMD in assessing/measuring the current competence of prospective users (LGU extension workers, other AAS providers) on the NELK modules, where an inquiry form was developed and floated as "ride-on" in three consultation workshops organized by CDMD for another purpose, hence no cost incurred particularly for this concern.

Other innovations included enhancement of the Farmer Business School to Climate-Smart Farmer Business School for the Highlands. Modifications on the design of the best practices of CHARMP 2 on try-out, as deemed fit were also made. ATI-CAR in initiating this try-out,

while guided by CHARMP 2's best practices, injected some modifications particularly on the time spent, adjusting them when necessary, in undertaking the activity and some procedures.

Knowledge Management

Annotations:
This section should summarize and comment on project progress and performance with regard to its planned KM activities, including the adequacy of staff and budgetary resources allocated to KM, and the extent to which knowledge management activities are contributing to improved results and outcomes and to supporting the scaling up agenda. Key questions to address include: What are the main lessons emerging from the grant project to date? Is due consideration being given to how lessons, good practice and results can be made known and to whom? How can these efforts be better focused and improved?

Discuss the key activities the grant is undertaking to document or share knowledge: any specific knowledge products being developed by the grant should be described, along with information on how they are being disseminated. If platforms were deployed as part of the KM activities, these should be mentioned in this section. Efforts to feed lessons into IFAD's operations, country strategy development and country policy dialogue should also be discussed. Discuss any challenges in implementing the project's KM plan and how these are being addressed

Implementation of a KM system during the project life was an integral part of AWPBs at the CF, SRN, and APIRAS levels. CFs and SRNs were encouraged to establish their own KM systems while APIRAS attempted to provide an integrating platform. APIRAS and SEARCA engaged a KM expert to provide an overall flow and integration of KM products that can be used and accessed by smallholder farmers in the region. SAAS project produced two key documents on KM: the first iteration of the SAAS Knowledge Management Strategy and the Knowledge Management Strategy Review and Way Forward Paper. The second paper attempted to provide specific steps for networks on how to operationalize KM in their respective areas of work.

BAEN engaged a consultant to establish their Agricultural Knowledge Management Strategy. The strategy included an agricultural knowledge audit and development of a website which now serves as its Knowledge Hub that carries all of BAEN's knowledge products and which chronicles the network's major activities. The BAEN website has a total of 85 Agricultural Apps in Bangladesh.

FAAS, on the other hand, identified a range of actions to strengthen KM systems for Fiji AAS: (1) to establish a working group to further inventory and collate information and knowledge products; (2) utilise PAIS as a database for information and knowledge management; (3) PIRAS to develop a central website linked to PAIS to communicate content and new information; (4) develop an ICKM Strategy to guide information and knowledge sharing; and; (5) strengthen use of social media platforms. A FAAS working group on KM was established comprised of PIRAS/SPC (lead) and members from MOA, iTaukei Affairs, Ministry of Education, FCLC and progressed the implementation of the recommendations for KM needs of FAAS. The work of the working group involved development of PAIs functions to include extension materials and developed a PIRAS/FAAS website linked to PAIS to communicate PAIS content and new products.

For PhilEASNet, integration of SAAS-related KM products into its existing system was a key activity. PhilEASNet's website was already embedded in ATI's own website and the challenge was to enhance it to facilitate sharing of knowledge from the SAAS project. As of project completion, SAAS KM products are shared through the various members of the PhilEASNet and of the ATI Network. In efforts to sustain the gains of the SAAS project, the PhilEASNet national CF is pursuing a linkaging partnership with the Philippine e-extension portal of the

country. A slot has been reserved which currently being updated. The extension portal can be viewed in this website http://e-extension.gov.ph/

As the SAAS Project ended, a transition plan was prepared to ensure that all SAAS KM products are properly turned-over to APIRAS. During the close-out process however, it was determined that APIRAS needed to undertake some self-assessment processes to determine its relevance, overall direction and the governance structure that it would need to become a viable network in the Asia Pacific. The APIRAS registered under Philippine laws was considered a local organization and did not really embody the international nature of APIRAS. The local network did not also have a capacity to sustain itself and much more to manage a KM system for a regional network. Given this situation, the APIRAS SC decided to delegate the task of managing the APIRAS KM to AESA. AESA will capitalize on a new project called the Last Mile Project to jumpstart the KM system and transform it into a truly regional system that can effectively support the needs and demands of the smallholder farmers in the region.

Scaling up and Sustainability
Annotations:
Provide evidence on the possibility of scaling up grant activities and describe which measures are being taken to promote scaling up, and through which channels (i.e. replication of activities, increased scope of the geographic target, policy dialogue, leveraging of additional funding). Describe whether the grant is linked to other development initiatives in the target countries (including IFAD-funded investment projects), and whether multi-stakeholder partnerships are pursued.
This section should also provide information on the sustainability of the grant, and on the likelihood of the benefits generated to continue after grant completion.

The SAAS Project enabled BAEN to extend its networking capacities and develop strong partnerships with key AAS stakeholders in Bangladesh. BAEN developed a strong linkage with IFAD-funded PACE and NATP projects of Bangladesh which opened opportunities for collaboration and scaling-up. Individuals from the main Government Extension Service providing organizations of Bangladesh like DAE (Crop sector extension), DLS (livestock sector Extension), and DOF (Fisheries sector extension), and other Government, Non-Government and Private Extension Providers attended different learning events (workshop, training, policy dialogue, etc.) organized by SAAS project of BAEN. Middle and Front level Advisory Service providers of different organizations received training from BAEN. They are now providing further similar training to their beneficiaries by using BAEN Training Modules. They are working in various locations of Bangladesh.

All the above developments in Bangladesh provided BAEN serious opportunities to scale up their activities by reaching more groups and individuals in Bangladesh. Since the training modules were found very effective and practical, BAEN partners from both the government and private sector increased the chances of these materials being used even beyond the SAAS project life. Already, BAEN was able to leverage SAAS resources to generate additional funding from other sources. The same leveraging strategy could be used to add to the sustainability and scaling up efforts of BAEN.

For PIRAS/FAAS, the implementation of SAAS activities successfully mobilised additional resources and partners from various initiatives and projects within SPC LRD and beyond which enabled activities to be scaled to Tonga, Vanuatu and Cook Islands. The various trainings conducted in Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and Cook Islands were co-funded by the SPC Pacific Seed for Life Programme (PS4L). In Cook Islands, activities were co-funded by the IFAD-CBRAP implemented by SPC. DFAT/IFAD provided confounding the PIRAS Forum in 2017 which enabled participation of additional countries and partners in the CAN process. In addition, the information sharing among PIRAS enabled revival/development of extension curriculum in USP, SINU and VAC.

CSIRO, ACIAR and New Zealand Land Care Research are currently discussing with PIRAS to build on the FAAS Forum structure to include Science Policy Subgroup to strengthen linkages between science and development work across the Pacific. Currently, CSIRO, ACIAR and Land Care are working with SPC on various initiatives which provide an opportunity to sustain PIRAS/FAAS and expand the lessons to other PICTs. In addition, SPC LRD being the host of PIRAS is consolidating programmes targeting extension services in the PICTs to contribute to PIRAS implementation. New programmes and projects currently being developed by LRD incorporate support for extension services in the region. Very recently, for Fiji, the Ministry of Agriculture made commitment to provide Secretariat support needs including human resources, office space and technical support to sustain FAAS movement. A Cabinet paper has also been developed and submitted to Fiji Parliament to endorse FAAS so it can be legally registered.

PhilEASNet believes that the SAAS Project secured merits for scaling-up and sustainability. Rather than looking outside, however, PhilEASNet will look into its own network and look for options on how to fully integrate the SAAS components into its own programs, projects and activities. In the area of strengthening the CF, PhilEASNet will work for the continuing expansion of the CF by organizing Regional Chapters in all 15 Regions of the country. Under KM, knowledge sharing through hubs will be intensified through a portal called KM4SAAS. This is being handled by the Information Division Office of ATI- Central Office that manages the e-extension portal of the Philippines. If the plan pushes through, the KM of the CF and SAAS shall be included in the Philippine e-extension portal. The portal can be visited in this website: http://e-extension.gov.ph/

Under scaling up, one intervention in CAR under PhilEASNet is the establishment of a Community Level Learning Site for Agriculture as a Local Market Place where varied activities from production to social and cultural will take place. The Local Market Place of LMP will be a venue for sharing, learning, and growing for all smallholder farmers involved. Finance support will be sourced. Under Policy Initiatives, PhilEASNET has scheduled an audience with the new Secretary of Agriculture to pursue the mainstreaming of the NELK in the Seal of Good Governance policy of the government. The network will also pursue the Extension Month proposal which will be synchronized with all the other monthly celebrations of the government to ensure approval.

Monitoring and Evaluation
Annotations:
This section should describe the grant M&E system from data collection to data analysis. All M&E outputs produced by the grants (e.g. surveys, case studies) should be described, as well as the extent to which these are being used for informed decision-making.

The SAAS Results Framework was the base document and sole basis for reporting under SAAS. The project started with no official mechanism for data collection. The primary methodology utilized for M&E was the Annual Accomplishment report which was packaged with the succeeding year's Work Plan and Budget. Through the Annual Reports and WPBs, SAAS stakeholders gained an understanding where the project was against its set targets and deliverables.

The other way to determine progress of the project was through learning events like KM, MEALS, Capacity-Building, and Sharing of Best Practices where CFs, SRNs and APIRAS were required to present their status and progress relative to the themes of the learning events. The major advantage of the learning events was that it provided a context for specific thematic priorities of the Project. In Capacity Building for example, depending on the situation of the networks, decisions were made to either pursue additional activities or to reallocate or

prioritize resources for activities that could enhance the situation of each of the stakeholders of the project.

Another important tool for the SAAS M&E was the Supervision Mission conducted by IFAD on an annual basis. The supervision missions required all project stakeholders to report against their targets and it focused on all aspects of the project – from financial management, coordination, compliance and the technical implementation of activities contained in the project's results framework. In the supervision in Bangladesh, KM and M&E emerged as two important issues requiring urgent solutions. To respond to these concerns, IFAD, SEARCA, and the APIRAS SC arrived at a consensus to reallocate resources to these concerns. Each of the CFs and SRNs were asked to identify activities and their corresponding financial requirements to implement a more robust KM and M&E systems. This decision was taken up by SEARCA and a revised AWPB was consequently sent to IFAD for formal approval.

In 2018, APIRAS initiated the crafting of a MEALS plan for SAAS. Unfortunately, the latest version of the MEALS plan was submitted only in January 2019 and there was not a chance to roll it out across the region since the project by that time only had 5 months left for technical implementation.

Financial and Fiduciary Management (See Separate Report on Financial Management)
Annotations:
This section should provide information on project costs and financial management, and it should include a statement of expenditures detailing the amount budgeted, spent and left outstanding under each budget category.

External Evaluation[14]

As part of its close out process, SEARCA, in coordination with IFAD and the APIRAS SC engaged a consultant to conduct an external evaluation of the SAAS Project. The evaluation focused on assessing the results of the implementation as related to the expected outputs, immediate objectives and development objective and provide recommendations on how the AAS innovations generated through the project implementation can be scaled up and out. What is shared here are only portions of the conclusions. The Evaluation Report, attached as **Annex G**, must be read in full to ascertain the parameters used by the consultant and the resulting findings based on those parameters.

For this portion of the report however, the evaluation results on accomplishments is mentioned to underscore the project's delivery of its contractual obligations as contained in the approved results framework of the project. In the evaluation report, the External Evaluator noted:

> "The effectiveness of the project has been assessed with regard to results in terms of achieved outputs. According to the logframe, the expected outputs were:
>
> 1. APIRAS, sub-regional networks, and 3 national fora capacitated as effective and inclusive brokers and reference points for capacity development of AAS providers in the region and effective coordinators and back-stoppers of AAS actors
> 2. Effectively networked AAS providers embedded in an effective knowledge management system
> 3. AAS strengthened in their role in regional and national policy dialogues on agricultural and rural development and engage in these

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[14] The external evaluation was conducted by Dr. Sanne Chipeta of Green Development Advice. Her full report is attached to this report as Annex B

The effectiveness of the SAAS project must be seen in the light of a serious delay in implementation. The project was set up as a three-year project 2016 to 2019. It was approved by IFAD December 2015, the MoU between IFAD and SEARCA was signed in June 2016, there was an inception workshop in September 2016, but the Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) between SEARCA and its partners were not signed until March/June 2017 and funds transferred in June 2017.

So, with the close of implementation in June 2019, the real time of implementation is only two years. Moreover, for the implementation in the Philippines, the effective period was even shorter / about one year, as a consequence, the effectiveness of the implementation in the Philippines has been reduced with some of activities not implemented and some still ongoing – planned but not fully implemented.

However, despite these drawbacks, most outputs have been delivered.

The project had three components as mentioned above, but the activities have throughout the region been conducted in four areas:

1. Strengthening the APIRAS network, sub-network, and country fora
2. Capacity development
3. Knowledge Management and Monitoring, evaluation and learning
4. Policy dialogue"[15]

It may be noted that the evaluation mentioned some activities that were planned but were not fully implemented. It must be mentioned however that the activities that were not fully completed were additional activities decided on after the Supervision Mission held in Bangladesh where CFs and SRNs were asked to identify activities that will enhance KM and M&E implementation at the CF and SRN levels. All contractual obligations as per the original MOA were already complied with.

It might also be worth sharing here the conclusions and part of the lessons learned presented in the evaluation as a glimpse of what SAAS has accomplished and what it can offer as lessons in case a similar undertaking is initiated:

"9.1 Conclusion

As stated above, the SAAS project has confirmed that strong networks of RAS stakeholders in the Asian Pacific region that can contribute to strengthening pluralistic agricultural extension systems to provide better and more responsive services to smallholder farmers are very relevant and there is a growing interest for sharing knowledge and experiences across the countries as well as linking up to the global context of RAS.

The SAAS project has made important strides is strengthening such networks at country level in Bangladesh and the Philippines and has also provided for this to be facilitated from the regional and especially the sub-regional level. The project has been effective in supporting network activities in Bangladesh, the AESA sub regional network has been effective in facilitating and providing technical support for this as well as in implementing the knowledge management strategy through its virtual network. The project has been only

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[15] Final Report of the External Evaluation. Sanne Chipeta. December 2019. p.14

partly effective in the Philippines as this was seriously delayed because of institutional challenges in securing the flow of funds.

The activities in the countries have just began to take off, and therefore the outcomes at the field level are still rather limited. But especially in Bangladesh, the country forum has been well received and recognised by the RAS stakeholders as an actor that can facilitate coordination, policy and capacity development in the country.

The AESA network has proved to be very effective with regard to knowledge management and the virtual sharing and interaction has gained much interest in the region as well as globally.

The project has however been haunted by institutional challenges, which has limited the execution and the results of the project. Important lessons have been learned in this regard, which needs to be reflected in the continuous development of the network.

9.2 Lessons Learned

It is clear that the network can move and become relevant to stakeholders. But probably the most important lesson is that a network setup of individual members and primarily involved in public sector delivery of RAS, is not adequately effective to facilitate change and transformation of the RAS systems to be more responsive to smallholder farmers. The network cannot become effective by only relying on the commitment of a few individuals as it is now. A healthy and effective network requires the engagement of committed and dedicated institutions to ensure that the engaged individuals have their mandates from these institutions.

Moreover, there are serious lessons learned with regard to relevance and sustainability of APIRAS as an overall network for the whole Asia and Pacific region. This relates to the enormous territory and diversity of contexts that APIRAS is set to cover as well as the fact that the Asia and Pacific do not have any regional organisation developing common goals and policies with relation to agriculture, towards which the APIRAS can play a role for lobby and advocacy. So, with now five sub-regional networks and two affiliated, it is questionable whether APIRAS will continue to be able to hold all these together in one regional network. There are already signs that not all the so-called sub-regional networks find APIRAS relevant. Without the commitment and support from the network from below, it is not possible to hold this large region together in one network."[16]

Blossoms from the Field: Capturing Indicative Outcomes of the SAAS Project

With a very short project like SAAS with only two years of technical implementation, outcomes may be difficult to capture or even observe. With focus on executing activities and achieving deliverables, snippets of outcomes are easy to miss. Even key individuals tasked to report during the close-out meeting were not really conscious of putting outcomes in writing. Reports were heavy on recording of outputs. Oral narratives however unmistakably flowed to observations beyond inventory of outputs. Ripple effects of certain trainings were mentioned; synergies were observed; individual stories of people who gained new knowledge and experience dotted the otherwise highly technical narratives.

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[16] Final Report of the External Evaluation. Sanne Chipeta. December 2019. p.29

Noting these subtle indications of outcomes – or even impacts, key stakeholders of the SAAS project decided to pursue additional undertaking to cap the SAAS Project. It was decided that documentation of outcomes or impacts will be done. It was time to try and connect the dots. SEARCA, in coordination with CFs from Bangladesh, Fiji and Philippines, engaged local consultants to do the outcome documentation.

Beyond black and white narratives and statistics, stories of individuals stand out. The following are some of the stories captured in the outcome documentation:

Ripples in Bangladesh

Kbd. S. M. Awlad Hossain is a Program Coordinator at the Social Development Initiative (SDI) in Dhamrai. Mr. Hossain received two trainings from BAEN, first on Gender and Nutrition Sensitive agriculture, and second on Market and Value chain Development in Agriculture. He acquired and utilised the knowledge and skills gained from BAEN trainings and is now providing similar trainings to six (6) groups of small farmer beneficiaries of SDI consisting 150 members. Because of Mr. Hossain, small farmers are now producing safe vegetables without using any agro-chemicals and are consuming their own produce for their family's nutrition. Farmers under Mr. Hossain's mentoring have adopted proper post-harvest practices like cooling, shorting, grading, packaging, handling, loading, unloading, and proper storing of their agro-products. As a result, their post-harvest loses are drastically reduced and they are earning more compared to when they were on their own.

Azmin Akter was a home maker from the Village of Basna from Dhaka District. Azmin felt powerless and could not make contribution to family decisions due to her lack of economic contribution. Azmin joined a village female organization consisting of 15 women members and participated in trainings and income generating activities implemented by SDI extension agents who were re-echoing their learnings from BAEN modules. Azmin is now involved in homestead gardening with vegetables and fruits from where she gets nutritious food for her family. She gets additional value from her vegetables and fruits by practicing proper post-harvest activities like sorting, grading, washing, transporting and handling. As a result she is able to reduce the post-harvest loses of her vegetables and fruits and is now earning by marketing her surplus produce. Azmin is earning her own money now and can contribute to family expenses. She is also active in managing family affair and can make decisions for their own welfare and well-being.

Then there is Shokhi Choron Sarker from the village of Gajesshori in the District of Tangail. Shokhi Choron, is a honey bee farmer who received a training on "Value Chain & Market Development in Agriculture" with especial attention on Honey production and value chain development. The training was provided by extension workers of the Bangladesh Association for Social Advancement (BASA) who in turn received their trainings from BAEN. Shokhi Choron affirmed that after taking trainings and with minimal operational support from BASA, he learned to maximize the value of his honey by enhancing his production in terms of quality and quantity and by understanding the needs and requirements of his potential buyers. In addition to raw honey production, Shokhi Choron are getting bee waxes from beekeeping which is used for making cosmetics, candles, and furniture polish. For Shokhi Choron, beekeeping is a way to solve unemployment and for him personally, it was a way that increased his income and improved his and his family's living standards.

An Opportune Confluence in Fiji

Establishing FAAS was just a target in the SAAS MOA between PIRAS and SEARCA. In light of the state of the art of extension work in Fiji however, establishment of FAAS provided an

effective and coordinated platform for the agriculture advisory extension services (AAES) providers in Fiji. FAAS complimented the monopolistic extension services provided by government through the Ministry of Agriculture. The SAAS approach of conducting multi-stakeholder consultations re-awakened interests in AAES. Private AAES Providers, retired agricultural extension officers, professionals and farmers expressed interest to join FAAS and volunteered to deliver technical advisory support services to AAES providers and the farmers.

Understanding challenges and farmers demand in the country, the aggregation of AAES providers through FAAS paved the way for the conduct of relevant trainings like Taro Beetle Eradication, Mushroom Farming, Value Chain Analysis, and Agri-Food processing and quality control for the export market. These trainings happened because FAAS happened. In the broader context, the timing for the establishment of FAAS was spot on. AAES was prioritized by the Fiji Government as reflected in the Fiji Agriculture 2020 Policy Agenda that highlights the need to build modern agricultural development systems through Rural Transformation Centres (RTCs) for timely/demand driven and decentralized integrated service delivery. The Agenda calls for improving AAES delivery in the areas of education and training in agriculture, curriculum alignment, access to finance, agricultural information and technologies (animal, health production, land use, soil health, pests & disease, climate smart agriculture practices), agricultural facilities and infrastructure and strengthening linkages between research extension-farmers.

FAAS provided the avenue for AAES providers in the country to come together and engage the Fiji Government.

Serving Farmers Together in the CAR, Philippines

The SAAS Project under PhilEASNet tells a story of how a project navigated through pluralistic extension service provision and succeeded to work in harmony with another IFAD-supported project. SAAS in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) was implemented in the midst of a much bigger project called CHARMP2, another IFAD supported project meant to improve livelihood and increase farm family income of rural poor through sustainable agricultural development and improvements in land tenure security, food security and watershed conservation.

SAAS adopted two of the best practices of CHARMP 2 with modifications to suit the situation – the participatory approach in planning and the community livelihood assistance funding strategy – in the implementation of two interventions for the farmers. Guidance from CHARMP 2 staff members was sought particularly during the planning stage of the interventions. They served as resource persons and provided some tips based on their experience. SAAS did not have to reinvent the wheel. It simply enhanced what has already been working based on CHARMP 2 experience and made it its own. One example of this initiative is the Farm to Business School where SAAS enhanced it to include Climate Smart technologies – bringing forth a new module called Climate Smart Farm to Business School.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Annotations:
This section should describe the major accomplishments achieved and constraints
encountered, as well as recommendations for the following phases of grant implementation.

Analyzing correspondence between targets as contained in the results framework and the outputs achieved by the project, it can be concluded that SAAS delivered all its contractual obligations – save maybe for some activities that were deliberately modified, replaced or not pursued as a response to circumstances that the project went through its lifetime. Completing contractual obligations, however, is totally different from achieving the project's desired outcomes and impacts. There is also the question of utility, sustainability, and scaling-up. Unfortunately for SAAS, APIRAS produced major documents like the MEALS document, the KM Framework and the Capacity-building Plan that were never used. The documents were delivered as part of the project's desired outputs but they were never put to use.

One limitation in this area is the project timeframe itself which may be deemed too short for completion, buy-in, roll-out, and integration of these major outputs into individual CFs and SRN systems and then creating the platform for integration at the regional level. Geographic distribution with its attendant time differences is also a challenge. Bringing people together from across the region on a regular basis was simply too expensive. It was imperative to use online platforms. Despite however, the exponential growth in communications and the various platforms available for online meetings and discussions, key stakeholders and decision-makers in the SAAS project still found it difficult to find a common time to converse and make decisions on major SAAS activities. Response time to communications became a serious issue. Add to this predicament the fact that there were few paid dedicated focal people to attend to project needs on a day-to-day basis, the situation became a real challenge. Ad hoc functions often depends on commitment and availability of people. When the focal person on an ad hoc basis is thinly spread over other commitments, the project has to wait until that person becomes available or disposed to respond to project needs.

Beyond the timeframe and geographic distribution however, the capacity and readiness of all stakeholders involved in the project were also a source of constraints. When engaging donors for grant-making, entering into agreements or understanding with other organizations or the acts of receiving and managing grant funds, even the most basic legal requirements are a must. This is one of the weakest points of some organizations in the SAAS stakeholders. SAAS history is replete with circumstances where activities were delayed or funds were withheld or channeled through other organizations because the partner organization was not legally registered, did not have a bank account, no system to manage the funds and project activities with.

The foregoing discussions seemed to convey real difficulties in implementing the SAAS project. It must be noted however that it is in this light where the effectiveness of SAAS could be established. It is true that attending to the basic requirements of organizations to enter into MOUs, MOAs and receive funds chew into the technical time of the project. The beauty of SAAS though is that it responded to the real demands of its partners during that time. The acts of strengthening and capacity development started from that moment when SAAS project through SEARCA assisted SAAS partners get registered and open their own bank accounts, or search and enter into agreement with proxy organizations to receive and manage funds. But IFAD and SEARCA showed flexibility by displaying willingness to handhold their partner organizations while taking baby steps during the project's start up period. These things were not in the results framework but project SAAS wraps up and leaves its partner organizations with the most basic competencies to be able to take steps forward to more formal engagement with other partners – private sector and donors alike.

As SAAS ends, recommendations on the technical aspect of the grant include:

1. Defining metrics that will determine project progress against its targets and contractual obligations and creating the mechanisms – with definite roles and responsibilities – that will facilitate the flow, the integration, and processing of information is a must at

the project onset. Firming up of the MEAL system should be done at the project start-up and should guide the work planning and budgeting exercise.

2. Together with the MEALS, it is also important to lay down the infrastructure for national, sub-regional, and regional knowledge management system that can capture, organize, process, transform, deploy and communicate SAAS project's contribution to the pool of knowledge on AAS. The KM system should also provide on-demand access to knowledge to smallholder farmers and other project stakeholders from the national, sub-regional, and regional levels. Capturing emerging lessons from the project and transforming them into best practices notes and other knowledge products that provide relevant and practical solutions to smallholder farmers as well as to other stakeholders of the project should be an integral part of the KM system. The KM system should also facilitate continuing knowledge build-up through people engagement and exchanges, sustainability conversations, research, and documentation of best practices, stories of interests, stories of champions, and others.

3. Crafting of a resource mobilization program with dedicated functions, tasks and responsibilities should have been an integral element of the Project. The grant should have been treated as an investment and a platform for financial sustainability rather than a one-time engagement and a sole source for a project like SAAS.

4. Identification of national, sub-regional, and regional platforms that will serve as owners, managers, and repository/hub of MEALS/KM/CAPB outputs. Ownership and responsibilities over these platforms should not be on an ad hoc basis but on a programmatic commitment with its own personnel, work plan and budget.

Recommendations for the Country Fora

1. Building a targeted capacity-building plan that will include developing capacities on:

   - Effective delivery of extension or agricultural advisory services. This broadly includes continuing updating, equipping and retooling on new technologies, strategies, and approaches in agricultural advisory services, research, and developing skills that can help address emerging challenges like climate change. The development of best practices notes contributes to this capacity.

   - Governance that will help each forum pursue its reason for being and properly manage its activities, operations, and resources. This capacity includes developing and/or strengthening organizational policies and procedures, operational guidelines, human resources, and other organizational development components that could help the forum become an effective extension service provider to its local stakeholders.

   - Resource mobilization to sustain itself, its people and its projects. This involves securing support and various resources to realize its development objectives. This capacity contributes to stability and sustainability of the forum as it implements is programs, projects and activities.

2. Setting-up structures that are aligned with and connected to the regional mechanisms on KM and MEALS. This includes investing on information technology hardwares and softwares that could store, organize, and share KM products within the country, the sub-region, and the region.

3. Engaging appropriate government agencies for policy support to AAS.

Recommendations for APIRAS

Of all components of the SAAS project, strengthening APIRAS as a regional network proved to be the most challenging. Its registration as a network remained under the Philippine laws which limited its juridical capacity and responsibilities. Consequently, it failed to live up to its potential as a regional network. Despite having its charter approved doubts on its capacity to reflect its international or regional nature began to emerge. The most difficult part is that the APIRAS Secretariat failed to capitalize on SAAS resources that as the project winded down, it found itself with no personnel and no other resources to sustain itself.

During the close-out meeting in November 2019, the APIRAS SC fortunately affirmed the need for a regional aggregation platform like APIRAS. The APIRAS also agreed to bring this concern as SAAS transitions to the Last Mile Project (LMP) where IFAD is one of the donors. The agreement was to hold an expanded SC meeting to discuss the fate and future of APIRAS. If this meeting happens, the main recommendation is for APIRAS to conduct a reflection and self-analysis that may include discussions on:

1. Clarification of APIRAS vision, mission, and reason for being. This may include discussions of relevance and accountabilities;
2. Assessing internal capacities and embedded resources to fulfill its reason for being. This may include discussions of built-in capacities of its CFs/SRNs, the SAAS resources being passed on to it, and its constituencies across the region;
3. Minding the gap between its reason for being and its embedded competencies. Discussions may include generating or building capacity, strengthening governance mechanism and creating the integration framework; and,
4. Living up to expectations and potential: network strengthening, coordination, KM, M&E support, resource mobilization, integration, RAS, policy advocacy, sustainability.

End