



**STRENGTHENING RURAL ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC**

**APIRAS Learning Workshop,**

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## **Session 5:**

# **Emerging Country Forum Current Status of the Country Fora (CF): Malaysia**

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# Scenario of Agriculture and Agriculture Extension in Malaysia

- Agriculture is becoming more integrated in the agri-food chain and the global market, while environmental, food safety and quality, and animal welfare regulations are also increasingly affecting the sector. In facing the new challenges to meet growing demands for food, to be internationally competitive and to produce high quality agricultural products.
- At the same time, it must meet sustainability goals as part of the ongoing of agricultural policy, further trade liberalization and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.
- In global, Malaysia ranked 39th out of 113 countries in the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for 2021. Malaysia remains vulnerable to food insecurity in the future due to being reliant on imports for maintaining its food supply, especially for rice.
- To promote agriculture growth and rural development as well as poverty reduction, agricultural extension services play a key role in providing agriculture knowledge and information to help farmers to overcome those constraints faced by the farmers.
- The role of agricultural extension today goes beyond the transfer of technology and improvement in productivity, but also, inducing the development in farmers managerial and technical skills through training, facilitation, and coaching, among others.
- In Malaysia, most of the Malaysian farmers who belong to smallholder, rely mostly on extension workers for information and advisory services. The extension/advisory services providers in Malaysia include public and non-public institutions

# Extension/Rural Advisory Services (RAS) in Malaysia

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## Problems Faced by RAS

1. Technical services provided to farmers/growers are under resourced
2. Poor knowledge of improved agricultural technology
3. Illiteracy among farmers/smallholders
4. Poor communication skills
5. Lack of understanding between RAS officers and farmers/smallholders
6. Poverty
7. High agricultural input rates
8. Lack of resources and illiteracy in the promotion/use of better agricultural technology among farmers/gardeners

## Solutions

1. Strengthen the Competencies of Agriculture Extension Officers
2. Strengthen the Functionality of Agriculture Extension Agencies
3. Strengthen Capacity Building of Rural Community
4. Introduce the Model of Strengthen Agriculture Innovation System (AIS)

# Establishment of Malaysia Country Fora (MAFRASN)

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- Many challenges exist in agriculture and rural development today, including food price crises, natural resource depletion, changing and uncertain markets, environmental degradation, and climate change.
- Countries worldwide are affected, regardless of their social, economic, or political status.
- Additionally, despite national and international development efforts, there is still persistent rural poverty, and global nutrition challenges.
- Rural advisory services are fundamental to supporting people to deal with existing and new challenges, and to improve the livelihoods of rural people worldwide.
- The Malaysia Forum for Rural Advisory Services (MFRASN) is the umbrella organisation for rural and agricultural advisory services in Malaysia. Its objective is to create efficient, effective and synergistic linkages and partnerships among actors to improve the delivery of these services to farmers.



# 1. Key Interventions

- **Specific (S), Measurable (M), Attainable (A), Relevant (R), Timely (T)**

1. Planning for the Intervention
2. Start the Model of AIS
3. Scale up the Intervention
4. Monitoring the Progress
5. Sharing the Best Practices

# 2. Governance

- **Objectives of MFRASN:**

1. To act as the official body representing the professional interests of agricultural extension or rural advisory services in Malaysia.
2. To strive for enhancement of the importance and status of the agricultural extension or rural advisory services profession in the country.
3. To represent the views of the agricultural extension or rural advisory services profession, maintain its integrity, raise its status, and uphold the interests of the profession in all aspects of its professional activities.
4. To promote the advancement of agricultural extension or rural advisory services and other area of extension as a socio-scientific discipline in Malaysia.
5. To promote cooperation, loyalty and understanding among extension people and other extension officer/personnel.
6. To promote, encourage and contribute to the improvement and upgrading of standards in research, education and dissemination of knowledge pertaining to agricultural extension or rural advisory services and related social sciences.

# 3. Financing

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## 1. Academic Conferences

- Possible sources for revenue: Digital conference registration fees, access fees to a conference content library, author/presenter submission fees (DPC or micro-APCs) and sponsorship and/or advertising of the conferences hold.

## 2. Workshops, Seminars and Discussion

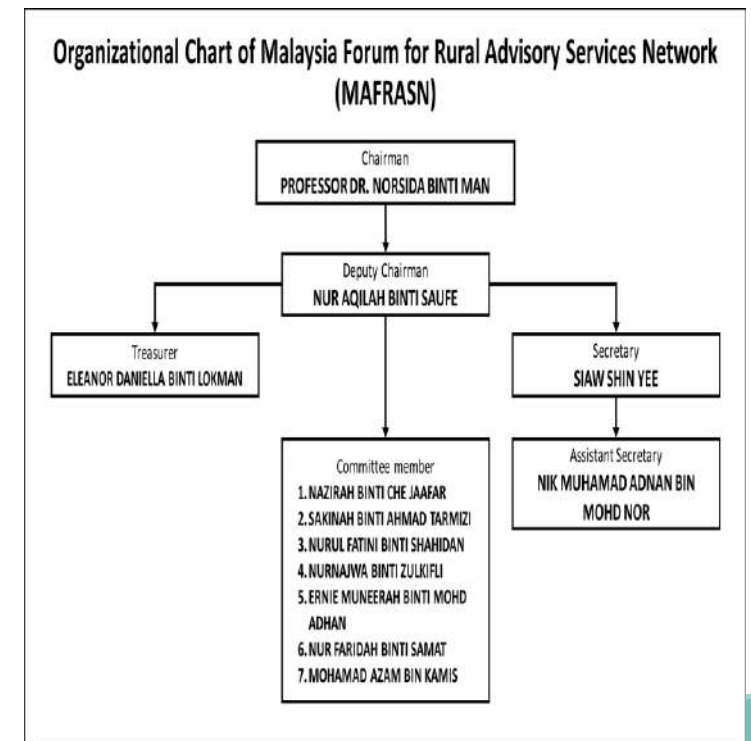
- Possible sources for revenue: Workshops registration fees, sponsorship and advertising, service charges, consultation fees and/ or agriculture products selling.

## 3. Grant

- Possible sources for revenue: Funding and/or contract research.
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## 4. Composition

- Network with agriculture extension agencies:
  1. Department of Agriculture DOA
  2. Department of Fisheries, DOF
  3. Muda Agriculture Development Authority MADA
  4. Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority RISDA
  5. Farmers Organization Authority FOA
- Network with research agencies: Malaysia Agriculture Research and Development Authority (MARDI), Institute of Plantation Research, UPM, Malaysia Palm Oil Board MPOB etc.
- Network with NGO: Ar Raudah Foundation
- Network with private companies
- It provides a mechanism for the diverse actors – including farmers – to exchange information, share lessons, and identify opportunities for providing services to each other and innovating on how to provide advisory services in their domains of work.



# 5. Challenges and Opportunities

## 1. Institutional Sustainability

- **Explore new opportunities:** Keep a flexible approach while looking for new opportunities that may have to modify our priorities to adopt to changes.
- **Develop new partnerships:** These partnerships will make enable the association more stable and will also help in taking the mission ahead.
- **Boost existing relations:** Manage existing relations with donors, stakeholders and beneficiaries, clients, farmers, researchers and so on in a proper way.
- **Communication and Outreach:** Have and maintain a strong communication strategy that can help in showcasing the results of any works from the association to a large audience. Have a monthly communication plan that can be used for updating in webpage, social media profile, sending donor mails etc.
- **Volunteer engagement:** Engaging volunteers for performing some activities suit the mission of the association. As volunteers do not take any salary therefore can use this human resource to continue the association's mission without spending money.

## 2. Financial Sustainability

- **Sale of agricultural product:** Some of the agricultural products can be sold in the market could also be sold using the association platform.
- **Diversify funding sources:** Diversifying donor base and to develop long term partnerships with donors.
- **Diversifying donors:** Look at various options through which the association can get dome funding, this includes from, local institutions, private companies, individuals etc.
- **Create inventory of resources:** Create an inventory of all physical resources that the association can keep after a research project ends.
- **Service Fee:** Charge of nominal fees from the target beneficiaries for the maintenance and functioning of the project.
- **Membership fees:** Annual fee from all your members.
- **Online Fundraising:** Online fundraising can help you reach a wide audience and individuals who like your project can fund you.

## 5. Challenges and Opportunities

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### 3. Human Capacity

- Building and enhancing capacity to conduct international collaborative research on global issues can be helpful for members in the association who are going to initiate locally based research in their own countries.
- Networking is another major dimension of capacity building. Researchers or clients can be encouraged to establish working relationships in different ways, depending on the programmer's priorities, for example:
  1. Networks linking multiple scientific domains
  2. Institutional networks beyond the academic sphere
  3. Linkages across geographic boundaries
- For skills and experience, research capacity, researchers and research institutions could build and strengthen through scientific activities, but also the non-scientific skills to initiate projects, and to carry them through to successful completion. These include acquisition of funds and formation of collaborative teams, oversight and management of grants and personnel, hiring, contracting, auditing, accounting, writing and editing of proposals and publications, public communications, knowledge of ethics and safety standards, maintenance of buildings and equipment.

## 6. Future Plans

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- Sensitization and awareness raising among stakeholders
  - Integration of RAS with research, the private sector, training, capacity building, and education programs
  - RAS may include services such as:
    1. Dissemination of information
    2. Training and advice for individual farmers, groups of farmers, farmer organizations and other agribusinesses
    3. Testing and practical adaptation of new technologies on farm
    4. Facilitation of linkages to market actors (financial and non-financial inputs, market channels, etc.)
    5. Facilitation of linkages with the public sector and government
    6. Support to institutions' building processes (development of informal and formal farmer organizations at different levels)
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