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WORKSHOP SUMMARY

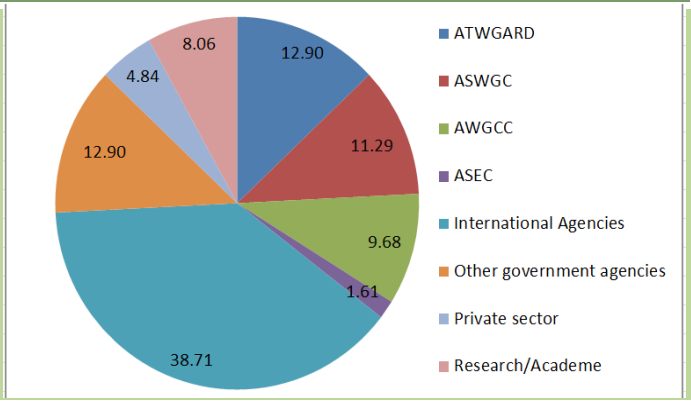
ASEAN-CRN Workshop on Promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture Practices

26-27 October 2015 | Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Background

The **ASEAN Climate Resilience Network (ASEAN-CRN) Workshop on Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Practices** was conducted on October 26-27 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Members from the ASEAN Working Group on Agricultural Research on Technology (ATWGARD), the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Crops (ASWGC) and the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) as well as national and international research organizations and development partners came together to exchange knowledge on CSA practices, to learn about UNFCCC processes and related Climate Finance opportunities as well as to discuss collaborative strategies to scale-up CSA practices in ASEAN. To successfully develop and scale-up CSA practices and to make use of UNFCCC related opportunities, cooperation between the three working groups is needed. The ASEAN-CRN provides a platform to do so.

Breakdown of workshop participants (ASEAN-CRN Workshop in HCMC)



The workshop built on the ASEAN-CRN regional process in which climate change vulnerability of the ASEAN Member States (AMS) had been assessed, when promising CSA practices to promote resilience had been identified and areas for regional cooperation had been agreed upon. This process fed into the ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Promoting CSA Practices in ASEAN which constitutes the guiding framework for the work of the ASEAN-CRN.

Key Findings

[1] To address the interlinked challenge of climate change and food security, both adaptation and mitigation are needed and integrated approaches should be promoted. CSA is an integrated approach that promotes practices benefitting the food security and livelihoods of farming communities while providing co-benefits on GHG mitigation. ASEAN plays an important role to highlight the role of CSA for smallholder farmers and local communities and to amplify their voice in international discussions. Up to now the UNFCCC has been addressing agriculture at a general level focusing on adaptation and food security while separating mitigation which remains highly politicized. The COP21 is an important milestone in negotiations and ASEAN

but future opportunities to advance agriculture in climate change related discussions remain. To take action on the regional level, the ASEAN-CRN members target providing an input to the SBSTA work program for its next meeting in June 2016.

[2] Cross-sectoral coordination is crucial to ensure that agriculture related concerns and solutions become part of future climate change planning and action. The development of the INDC and the NAP provide the obvious opportunities to integrate agriculture into the national climate change agenda and several AMS have successfully done so. As key for success of the NAP process, AMS representatives highlight the importance of awareness raising and capacity building on all levels, cross-sectoral coordination, mainstreaming climate change into existing policies and plans, the use of climate information services and performance based monitoring. While agriculture has been integrated in a very general manner in the INDCs, their implementation will require strong cooperation between stakeholders from agriculture and the climate change focal points in AMS.

[3] The international climate finance landscape provides ample opportunities to access funding in support of scaling-up CSA practices in ASEAN. To develop winning proposals, the priorities of funds need to be matched with national priorities in AMS. While funds are usually accessed by AMS or through international agencies, the ASEAN-CRN can play a supporting and coordinating role in developing funding proposals and promoting exchange between programs. In the longer term ASEAN could promote the establishment of a regional entity to access climate finance. Five priority actions have been identified for the ASEAN-CRN to advance the scaling-up of CSA practices:

- ***Program Development:*** Invest in pilot Implementation of CSA practices and generation of an evidence base regarding benefits
- ***Knowledge Management:*** Develop and share experiences on successful models to scale-up CSA practices in particular to reach smallholder farmers
- ***Funding & Capacity Building:*** Provide opportunity and funding for capacity building and technical exchange and assistance among participating countries
- ***Early warning & Climate Information:*** Develop effective and efficient approaches to provide integrated, climate information based services to marginalized farmers
- ***Market Development:*** Integrate marketability and other value chain aspects into research on CSA practices (e.g. stress tolerant varieties (STVs))

The ASEAN Regional Guidelines for Promoting CSA Practices will guide this process.

[4] STV rice and maize are widely promoted in ASEAN and numerous varieties with tested yield, resilience and mitigation benefits exist to adapt to the increasing climate stresses in the region. But challenges in reaching farmers remain. Successful new varieties need to align to the market hence researchers need to take into account the whole value chain, from production to marketing. To do so, consulting with rice millers and exporters as well as engaging farmers in testing STV (e.g. on-farm trials) are effective approaches. To ensure the availability of STV seeds to farmers in sufficient quantities and at affordable prices, functioning seed distribution systems are key. Providing a positive investment climate through supportive policies is needed to engage the private sector. Community based seed production is also widely promoted in AMS and to ensure its success, investment in functioning systems for agricultural extension and quality control is needed. STV promotion needs to be combined with improved farm management practices to unlock their full yield and resilience potential.

[5] Climate information services (CIS) allow farmers to make informed farm management decisions to reduce climate related risks. Promoting CIS for climate change adaptation (e.g. early warning systems) has high priority amongst AMS and a range of services to make use of climate information for agriculture exist. Climate information is used at different levels of decision making, from farm management to land use planning and private sector investment to policy making. For CIS to be effectively support farmers they need to end-user driven, accurate, site-specific, reliable, sustained, and translated into relevant farm management practices. The challenge is to make information relevant to farmers who often have limited formal education. Furthermore, many climate induced response strategies require community based decisions and are not effectively pursued by individual farmers alone. Intermediaries in the form of farmer organizations and on farm extension services are ways to overcome this challenge.

[3] Crop insurance is a promising tool to increase the resilience of farmers and different models are promoted in AMS. Amongst those are yield based, indemnity based and weather index based insurance. The high risk, transaction cost and limited customer data availability in the smallholder based agricultural sectors of AMS are challenging the provision of affordable crop insurance but new technologies are tested to address this challenge. In AMS, crop insurance schemes are often provided by governments and receive subsidies. To promote private investment, government support strategies should avoid distorting the market e.g. through subsidizing premiums. Targeted communication campaigns are important to increase the awareness of farmers on the impacts of climate change and the opportunities from crop insurance. Integrating other insurance products can raise farmers' demand and at the same time provides incentives for the private sector to invest. AMS can benefit from regional collaboration to develop effective and efficient crop insurance models, communication strategies and related policies.