



SEAMEO SEARCA

ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2021/2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture

www.searca.org



Executive Summary

In the second year of its 11th Five-Year Plan, SEARCA continued to promote ways to accelerate, sustain, and scale a growth cycle that begins with providing opportunities for farmers to increase production and earn more income with innovative technologies, approaches, and markets. With **Accelerating Transformation Through Agricultural Innovation (ATTAIN)** as its overarching theme, SEARCA's strategic intent is articulated through its core programs on **Education and Collective Learning, Research and Thought Leadership, and Emerging Innovation for Growth**. The Center focused on seven priority areas to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To realize its mission to **elevate the quality of life of agricultural families through sustainable and resilient livelihoods and access to modern networks and innovative markets**, SEARCA is working on achieving five outcomes.

ATTAIN Outcome 1: Stakeholders embodying mindset transitions

SEARCA provided **scholarships and training** to upskill leaders, researchers, educators, change agents, and farmers. All the new scholarship grants were jointly funded by SEARCA and partner universities, government research institutions, and German and French development organizations.

SEARCA also offered **institutional development assistance** to higher education institutions, which it sees as drivers of innovation. The Center assisted in developing an **Internal Quality Assurance System** for the **Royal University of Agriculture (RUA)** under the Cambodian government's Higher Education Improvement Project. SEARCA is also implementing the **"Leveling-Up Philippine Higher Education Institutions in Agriculture, Fisheries, and Natural Resources (LevelUPHEI AFAR)"** project funded by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Philippines to benefit members of the **State Universities and Colleges-Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines, Inc. (SUC-ACAP, Inc.)**, through short-term trainings and other learning events. Moreover, SEARCA donated 4,030 books to 25 universities in Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines during the fiscal year.

To improve quality of teaching and learning and to **promote internationalization of higher education**, SEARCA actively participated in multi-country higher education networks. As secretariat of the SEARCA-established **Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC)**, the Center managed 44 student and faculty travel grants and seed fund for collaborative research grants. It also co-organized four UC knowledge events. Moreover, SEARCA administered joint scholarships with **Agrinatura**, the European alliance for agricultural knowledge and development.

SEARCA also **encouraged young people to get involved in agriculture** through activities that encourage sharing, learning, and designing innovations. These activities include the **Innovation Olympics 2.0** focused on developing precision agriculture solutions, **agri-robotics ideation** session for kids with LEGO Education partners, "Youth in Sustainable Food Consumption and Waste Management" video contest, and Training on Digital Storytelling for Agricultural Extension and Marketing.

190

SEARCA
SCHOLARSHIPS
MANAGED

39

NEW
SCHOLARS

14

JOINT
SCHOLARSHIPS
PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTED

24

REGIONAL AND
NATIONAL LEARNING
EVENTS CONDUCTED

3,831

ARD STAKEHOLDERS
TRAINED IN 11
SEAMEO MEMBER
COUNTRIES

10

SEARCA ONLINE
LEARNING
AND VIRTUAL
ENGAGEMENT
(SOLVE) WEBINARS
HELD

44

UNIVERSITY
CONSORTIUM
GRANTS MANAGED

4,030

BOOKS DONATED
TO 25 UNIVERSITIES

19

RESEARCH PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTED

14

GRANTS FOR
RESEARCH TOWARDS
AGRICULTURAL
INNOVATIVE
SOLUTIONS (GRAINS)
FUNDED

3

PROFESSORIAL
CHAIR GRANTS
AWARDED

4

TRAVEL
GRANTS
PROVIDED

ATTAIN Outcome 2: Enabling policies and regulatory frameworks supporting agricultural and rural development (ARD) at local, national, and international levels

Laws and regulations that influence farm operations and access to financial services and markets are also critical to agricultural transformation. SEARCA thus conducted researches for 1) **program development** at the national and regional levels and to influence policy, 2) **support ASEAN**, 3) **create digital platforms for research**, and 4) **scale out to amplify action researches**.

Among the **Research for Development (R4D) projects** implemented by SEARCA were those funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Deutsche Gesellschaft for Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH; CropLife Asia; National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and Department of Agriculture, Philippines, to name a few. Two projects conducted in support to ASEAN were **Enhancing Food Supply Chain Resilience and Food Security in ASEAN Using Digital Technologies Agricultural Transformation** in partnership with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the **Market Integration in the ASEAN Region: Responding to Food Security and Inclusiveness (ATMI-ASEAN)** funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and co-implemented with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). SEARCA also collaborated with the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) in developing the **AgPractices&Domains tool** that will provide integrated pest and disease management options in rice-based cropping systems. At the same time, SEARCA continued to develop the **Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Knowledge Platform** to support research activities in the region.

Among SEARCA's scaling out activities to amplify action researches were rescoping and revalidation of the **School-plus-Home Gardens with Biodiversity Enhancement Enterprise (SHGBEE)** in Busuanga, Palawan, Philippines and **Trainers' Training in Integrating the SHGBEE in the Establishment of Agricultural Technology Parks (ATPs) and Mini-ATPs in Cambodia**.

SEARCA leveraged research to contribute to creating an enabling environment comprising policies and support systems that empower farmers at various points in the value chain. These research projects included **formulating the National Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization and Industrialization Plan (NAFMIP) 2020-2025** for the Philippines, **promoting climate-smart land use** through ASEAN policy documents, developing a **jurisdictional-level platform for the management of forest and landscape climate finance investments**, and formulating the **Seed Industry Development Program of the Philippines**.

ATTAIN Outcome 3: Wider access to innovative products and services and business models for increased productivity and income

SEARCA supported the development of new and more effective agtech solutions, including digital agriculture, and linked farmers to these cutting-edge technologies to improve farm operations and income. SEARCA initiatives that championed digital agriculture include: **Pilot Digital Agriculture Platform in the Philippines**, **SEARCA Hub for Agricultural and Rural Innovation for the Next Generation (SHARING)**, **Southeast Asian Platform to ATTAIN Agri 4.0 Collaboration and Empowerment (SPACE)**, and a project to improve farmers access to agricultural technology, products, and services through digitization and consolidation of local agri-supply stores.

The Center undertook projects that introduced climate-resilient agricultural technologies for farming communities. These include the **Technology Adoption for People-Centered Innovation and Livelihood Integration (PILI) Project**, the Jollibee Group Foundation-funded **Project SAYA: Strengthening Yield of *Allium cepa* L. (Onion) in the Philippines**, and **Ronnie Baugh Tractor Local Fabrication**.

SEARCA also supported the development of emerging innovation models and technologies to improve productivity at various points in the value chain. This was carried out mostly through the SEARCA **Grants for Research towards Agricultural Innovative Solutions (GRAINS)** that funded 14 startups and similar ventures.

ATTAIN Outcome 4: Increased level of investment in the agricultural and rural sector

SEARCA stepped up its investments in agriculture and food systems through **various capacity building, research, and innovation grants** awarded to potential drivers of ARD. Through a number of collaborative projects, SEARCA also **invested in commodities and initiatives that have the potential to catalyze additional financing from other sources**. The Center led the development of regional road maps on selected commodities that are investment opportunities. It also worked with FAO to develop a pioneering jurisdictional-level platform for forest management and climate finance. Moreover, SEARCA funded the crafting of the Seed Industry Development Program of the Philippines and collaborated with the Philippine government in formulating the National Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization and Industrialization Plan (NAFMIP) 2020-2025 for the Philippines which will guide sector-wide growth and galvanize sector-wide public and private investments.

ATTAIN Outcome 5: Food and nutrition security from a range of choices ensuring well-being in an evolving lifestyle

SEARCA **prioritized actions that promote food and nutrition security** with particular **emphasis on food consumption** and the **impact of changing food preferences** for a healthy diet. **Consumer preferences and commodity consumption patterns determined by the ATMI-ASEAN value chain studies** focused on pork-based processed products in the Philippines, maize in Cambodia and Lao PDR, pulses in Myanmar, and swine in Vietnam. Furthermore, the SEARCA-supported **School-plus-Home Gardens served as supplementary sources of nutritious food** during the pandemic. SEARCA also held a **regional competition showcasing youth actions for sustainable food consumption**.

SOLID RESOURCE BASE

Because all these development solutions rely on collaboration, SEARCA puts a **premium on working in partnerships and sharing of knowledge and expertise** through publications and various conferences, workshops, and knowledge events.

In Fiscal Year 2021/2022, SEARCA maintained its strong financial position with **judicious fiscal management** and **robust cash flows**. The Center's investment decisions were guided by its Governing Board-approved investment policy.

All of this work rendered by SEARCA for Southeast Asia was carried out by **a lean but excellent staff backed up by consultants and Senior Fellows**.

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TECHNOLOGIES
SUPPORTED

39

NEW AGREEMENTS
SIGNED WITH 9
INTERNATIONAL/
REGIONAL AND 23
NATIONAL/LOCAL
PARTNERS

81

PUBLICATIONS
PRODUCED

84

CONFERENCES,
WORKSHOPS, AND
KNOWLEDGE EVENTS
CONVENED

99

STAFF

208

CONSULTANTS

21

SENIOR FELLOWS