

# Asia-Pacific Farmers' Forum



IFAD's Medium-term Cooperation  
Programme with Farmers' Organizations  
Phase Two (MTCP2)



Investing in rural people



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This programme is financed  
by the European Union

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# Context

## **About IFAD's partnership with farmers' organizations**

Established in 2005 as a permanent feature of the IFAD Governing Council, the Farmers' Forum (FAFO) is a bottom-up process of consultation and dialogue between IFAD, governments and farmers' organizations that represent millions of small-scale farmers, fisher folk and pastoralists, both men and women, across the world. The forum aims to strengthen partnership and collaboration between IFAD and farmers' organizations in country programmes and investment projects and to build capacity within these organizations.

In support of the Farmers' Forum, projects are established to strengthen farmers' organizations and activities in the field. Thus, IFAD, together with several other donors (EU, SDC, AFD), has engaged into partnership with FOs through continental grants in Asia with the Medium-term Cooperation Programme with Farmers' Organizations in Asia and the Pacific (MTCP)<sup>1</sup> as well as in Africa with the Support to Farmers' Organizations in Africa Programme<sup>2</sup> (SFOAP).

The program was launched in November 2013, and its first steering committee was held in Hanoi in October 2014. Mid term review was processed in 2016 and concluded with 2nd steering committee in Laos in June 2016.

<sup>1</sup> The MTCP2 knowledge portal is accessible at <http://www.asiapacificfarmersforum.net/>.

<sup>2</sup> SFOAP is a sister programme of MTCP which supports 68 farmers' organizations in 48 countries across the African continent (see <http://www.sfoap.net>).

## **Supporting farmers' organizations in Asia and Pacific – Context of MTCP2**

The Asia and the Pacific region is home to 4 billion people, or 60 per cent of the world's population. It has 38 per cent of the world's arable land and its most extensive forest and fishery resources. The region feeds 60 per cent of the global population and produces 90 per cent of the world's rice, 40 per cent of its cereals and 40 per cent of its meat. It has a 70 per cent share of the global market for food and vegetables and 80 per cent of the global aquaculture market.

The first phase of the Medium-term Cooperation Programme with Farmers' Organizations in Asia and the Pacific (MTCP1) was implemented from 2009 to 2012. Covering 10 countries, it aimed to: (i) strengthen the networks of farmers' organizations; (ii) increase the engagement of these organizations in policy processes; and (iii) promote the involvement of farmers' organizations in IFAD country programmes and projects.

Building on this success, the second phase of the MTCP (2013-2017) was designed with extensive participation from the farmers' organizations and their members. As a result, it led to more emphasis on a farmer organization-driven implementation set-up and to the expansion of the geographical coverage of MTCP2 to 20 countries, 150 national FOs representing 20 million farmers in order to bring the benefits of its actions to a larger number of farmers' organizations in the region and to enhance the organizations' ownership – at both the regional and the national level – in the implementation of the programme's activities.





“IFAD is pleased to see tremendous progress in FO strengthening during the first years of MTCP2 implementation. We are confident that family farming will continue developing in Asia and the Pacific and feeding the people and exporting good quality products. With IFAD investments, Swiss and European Union support, we hope new development partners will join this effort in favor of 20 million small farmers.”

Benoit Thierry, IFAD Task Manager for MTCP2

# The Medium-term Cooperation Programme with Farmers' Organizations, Phase 2 (2013-2018)

MTCP2 aims to further strengthen the capacities of farmers' organizations in Asia and the Pacific to deliver improved and inclusive services to their members and to engage in effective dialogue with governments. It seeks to make farmers' organizations more viable, responsive and accountable to their members and more respected by their partners, and to help them participate more in the policymaking and programme implementation processes of governments and IFAD country operations.

## **The programme is articulated around four components:**

(i) strengthening farmers' organizations and their networks; (ii) supporting participation of farmers' organizations in policy processes; (iii) farmers' organization services and involvement in agricultural development programmes; and (iv) programme management and coordination.

**Geographical coverage.** MTCP2 has expanded its geographical coverage within South Asia and South-East Asia, and has opened it to the Pacific. MTCP2 is now implemented in 19 countries: four countries of South Asia – Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, seven countries of South-East Asia – Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, The Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, and seven countries in the Pacific – Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu. Expansion to other countries is work in progress, with for example scoping study and discussion with potential NIAs in Bhutan and Pakistan.

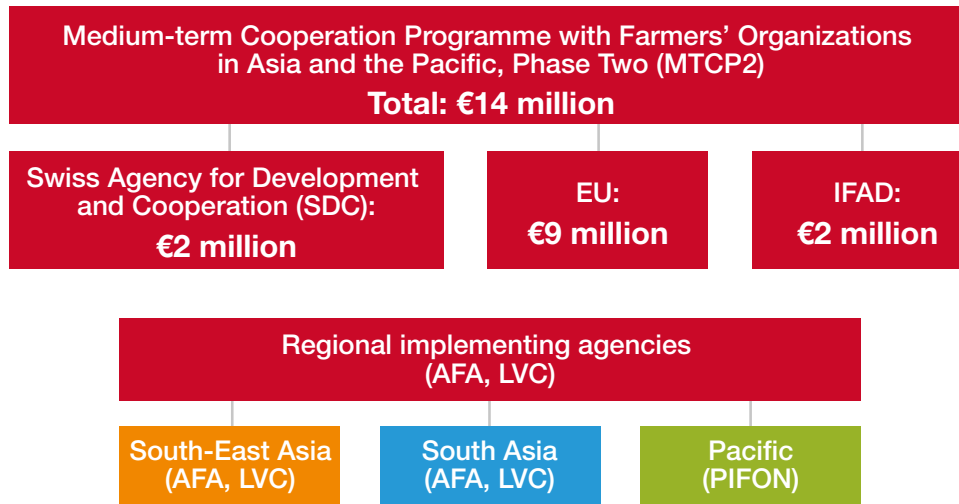
**Implementation modalities.** The programme is based on national platforms grouping all farmers' organizations in each country. These decide their own annual work plan, facilitated by a national implementing agency. Each subregion is coordinated by a sub-regional implementation agency (LVC/AFA and PIFON), and the whole regional MTCP2 is under the coordination of a regional implementing agency, the Asian Farmers Association, in partnership with La Via Campesina. The regional and subregional agencies are farmers' organizations that were selected through a competitive process to ensure direct implementation of the programme's activities. At country level, the national implementing agencies are farmers' organizations selected by the members of the national platforms.

**MTCP2's farmers' organizations reach.** MTCP2 primary beneficiaries are smallholder farmers who are current or potential members of participating farmers' organizations. At the end of 2016, the programme is benefiting 79 national farmers' organizations as members of the national platforms or forums in the participating countries. This includes 1,544 sub-national farmers' organizations, which together represent an estimated membership of 18 million individual farmers – some 11.8 million in South-East Asia and China, 6.1 million in South Asia and 45,000 in the Pacific.

**The total programme base cost** is estimated at US\$19 million. Programme costs are cofinanced by an IFAD grant of US\$2 million, a grant from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) of US\$3 million and a contribution of US\$14 million from the European Union (EU), through the ASEAN Farmers' Organizations Support Programme (AFOSP, see below).

**EU-funded AFOSP focusing on the ASEAN subregion.** In June 2015, MTCP2 received a grant of EUR 7.4 million (US\$8.3 million) under an agreement signed between the EU and IFAD for the funding of the ASEAN Farmers' Organizations Support Programme (AFOSP) MTCP2 and for regional policy dialogue in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) subregion (AFOSP/MTCP2 ASEAN). This EU contribution is one of the two pillars of the global EU-funded AFOSP programme supporting AFOSP/MTCP2 ASEAN and AFOSP/Farmers Fighting Poverty ASEAN (through a EUR 6.7 million grant from the EU).

The AFOSP was launched in September 2015. The recipient of the grant and implementing agency is (i) for the AFOSP/MTCP2 ASEAN: the Asian Farmers Association (AFA) in partnership with La Via Campesina (LVC) as the subregional implementing agency; (ii) and for the AFOSP/FFP ASEAN: AgriCord is the grant recipient and projects are implemented by farmers' organizations in partnership with agri-agencies members of AgriCord. The agreement between IFAD and AgriCord was signed on 6 May 2016.





## **BOX 1**

### **Complementarity between AFOSP MTCP2 and AFOSP FFP**

The AFOSP consists of two highly complementary actions:

- (i) Support to the Medium-term Cooperation Programme phase II and regional policy dialogue in ASEAN region (AFOSP/MTCP2 ASEAN); and
- (ii) Farmers Fighting Poverty – Food Security Initiatives of Farmers’ Organizations in a Regional Perspective programme (AFOSP FFP ASEAN)

The two actions share the same objectives and components, although both the approach and the level of intervention are different and complementary.

#### **Level of intervention**

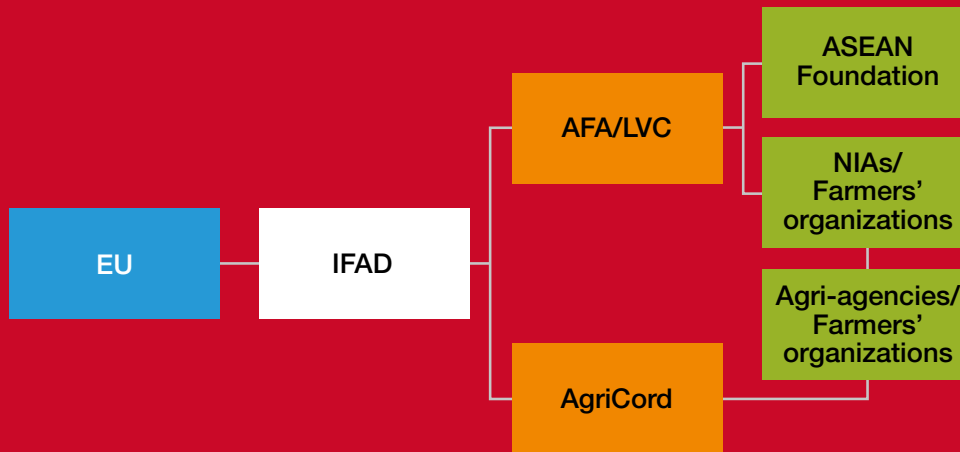
- MTCP ASEAN operates at the continental, regional and national levels, supporting farmers’ organization platforms at regional, subregional and national levels and to create institutional linkages between these platforms and ASEAN Secretariat.
- FFP/ASEAN mainly involves local farmers’ organizations and value chains specialized organizations from the local to the national level. In fact, one of the main pillars of the FFP is the funding of small organizations and local associations. Such funding is directly contracted by agri-agencies members of AgriCord with the local organizations (not via national organizations).

#### **Activities**

- MTCP2 ASEAN primarily focuses on activities that can benefit all members’ platforms towards building a common agenda for policy dialogue and joint action both for economic and political actions.
- FFP/ASEAN tailors its support to the specific needs of individual farmers’ organizations in terms of organizational strength and inclusiveness and institutional development, with a strong focus on business development through development of economic services.

## Approach

- MTCP2 ASEAN operates at the regional and national levels, supporting farmers' organization platforms to create institutional linkages between these platforms and ASEAN and its Member States. MTCP2 ASEAN's approach is of a programmatic and strategic nature as it supports the strategic plans of farmers' organizations, ensuring that programme activities contribute to the achievement of respective constitutional mandates and strategic objectives.
- The FFP/ASEAN approach is a demand-driven approach for single initiatives of farmers' organizations and is based on the relationships between agri-agencies (AgriCord members) and farmers' organizations. The participating organizations formulate proposals in close collaboration with one of the agri-agencies and submit them to the AgriCord Project Committee, which is responsible for the selection.



# 2016 Key outcomes and achievements

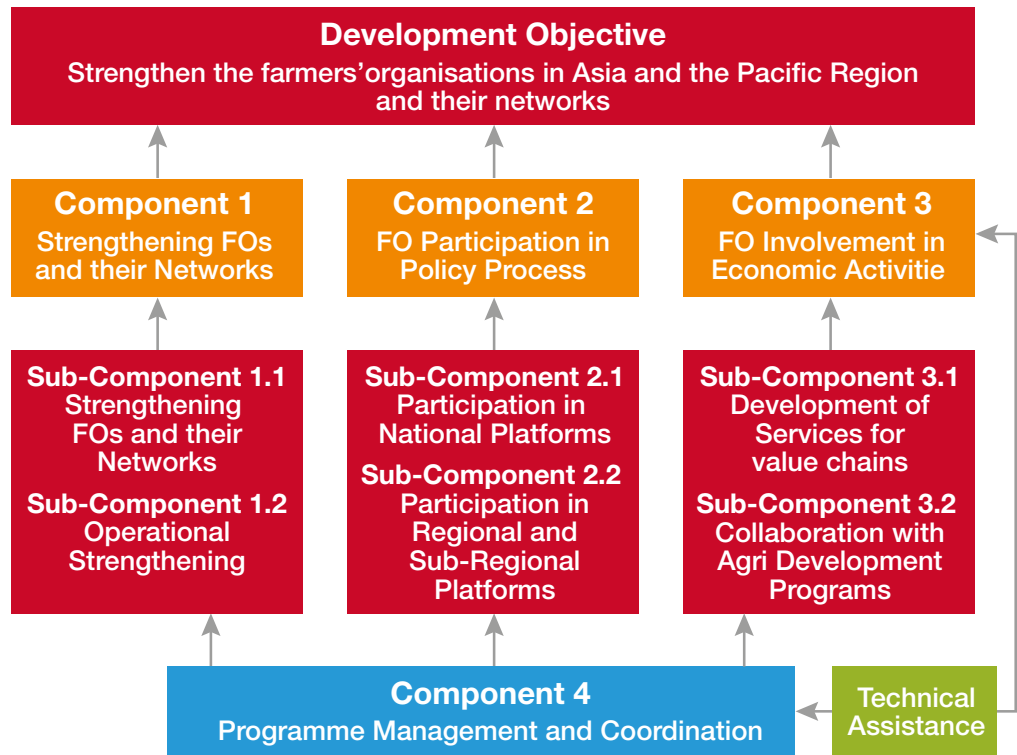
## Overall performance

2016 was a crucial year for MTCP2 as it reached its mid-term after two and a half years of implementation. It was also the first full year of implementation of AFOSP/MTCP2 ASEAN, with achievements presented in the the following pages. 2016 was a start-up year for AFOSP/FFP ASEAN and the main achievements were (i) the identification of farmers' organization projects to receive support from the programme and (ii) the development of financial reporting based on e-filing. Six projects have started in 2016 using prefinancing from farmers' organizations and their agri-agency partners (see achievements and stories below); 24 farmers' organization projects were validated and 13 other projects are under preparation for implementation in 2017. Projects are currently undertaken mostly by subnational farmers' organizations and are focusing on component 3 activities, "economic services".





## MTCP2 Logframe



## **Component 1: Strengthening farmers' organizations and their networks**

Expected outcome: Institutional and operational capacities of the farmers' organizations are effectively strengthened in correspondence with their roles and functions in policy process and services to members.

Component 1 activities serve the purpose of further strengthening the operational and institutional capacity of the organizations and eventually aid in achieving the goals of components 2 and 3. Some of the key achievements under component 1 are:

- Farmers' organizations reviewing their last year's performance and formulating plans for the succeeding year (Sri Lanka);
- Farmers are able to run their own groups and have support for their farm requirements (India);
- Farmer leaders are able to use different mobile applications for information and communication purposes (Laos);
- New partnerships and cooperation forged with other agencies and countries (Viet Nam);
- Information for accessing government services and links with local service providers (Bangladesh);
- Strategic plan 2017-2020 was formulated (Pacific); and
- Funds raised from membership dues (Philippines).

## **Component 2: Supporting participation of farmers' organizations in policy processes**

Expected outcome: Smallholder farmers' interests are promoted and their concerns are addressed in related policy process thanks to the strengthened capacities of the farmers' organizations.

Key outputs under component 2 include:

- Publication and distribution of key policy briefs on farmers' organization involvement in agriculture research and extension (Pacific);
- Farmers are represented in the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations as a result of dialogue with the Department of Agrarian Reform (Philippines);
- FO registered to Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System and accredited at the Philippine Coconut Authority (Philippines);
- Farmers' organizations could gain an increase in agriculture budget (Bangladesh);
- Policy paper on the status of farmers' rights (Indonesia); and
- In Laos, the national platform LFN gained a lot in terms of visibility and networking capacity with donors and the public sector and improved its capacity to engage in policy dialogue.

### **Component 3: Farmers' organization services and involvement in agricultural development programmes**

Expected outcome: Strengthened farmers' organizations providing effective pro-poor services and actively participating in agriculture and rural development, complementing agricultural development programme interventions where applicable.

Major outcomes of component 3 include:

- New customers for farmers after advertising farmers' products (Bangladesh);
- Business plans for bamboo, pig production, commodities (Laos); and
- Cooperation with development partners and government agencies (Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Pacific Region).

### **Overview of AFOSP FFP/ASEAN results and achievements**

In line with project design, most activities are linked to the delivery of economical services (component 3) and most registered targets are related to marketing support (elaboration of business plans, increase in marketed volumes, etc.). The boxes below give two examples of stories within FFP/ASEAN.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Source: *Farmers Fighting Poverty – Food Security Initiatives of Farmers' Organizations in a Regional Perspective (ASEAN) – “FFP/ASEAN” – First Annual Interim Report 2016*, AgriCord, May 2017.



## BOX 2

### **Cambodia: Federation of Farmers' Associations promoting Family Agricultural Enterprise in Cambodia (FAEC)<sup>4</sup>**

The “Federation of Farmers’ Associations promoting Family Agricultural Enterprise in Cambodia (FAEC)” groups 25 primary cooperatives and 28 associations, covering nine provinces. It represents over 5,000 family farmers, of whom 50 per cent are women. The goals of the federation are to strengthen its members’ capacities to support family farmers, promote value chains in support of family farming, defend the interests of family farmers and strengthen the role of women and youth in farmers’ organizations.

With the support of FFP/ASEAN, FAEC organized an intensive accompaniment to eight of its member cooperatives. Exchange visits and thematic workshops were organized on both technical and organizational issues. Items tackled were cooperative management, horticulture and member service development. By the end of the year, the eight supported cooperatives had developed a business and action plan.

In direct support to the members of the cooperatives, FAEC organized trainings on seed multiplication and on good agricultural practices in rice growing. Topics covered were seed selection and preparation, soil preparation, irrigation and the application of fertilizers, weeding and the proper use of agri-chemicals, good harvesting and post-harvesting techniques.

FFP/ASEAN also contributed to improved functioning of the federation. It facilitated the FAEC general assembly, to which representatives of each member cooperative and member association attended. Important agenda items were a report by the management to the members of the supplied services in 2015, the presentation of the accounts, the election of the Board

<sup>4</sup> See web reference AIN 6565 on agro-info.net: [http://agro-info.net/?menu=projects&view=project&project\\_id=25631](http://agro-info.net/?menu=projects&view=project&project_id=25631).

of Directors and the approval of the strategic plan for the next five years. In line with this strategic plan, which was approved by the General Assembly, FAEC recruited additional staff: a secretary general, an extension officer and an accountant. The immediate expected result of these actions is an increased accountability towards the members and an increase of service delivery to the members.



### BOX 3

## Philippines: Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LPMPC)<sup>5</sup>

Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LPMPC) started as rotating savings and credit group (ROSCA) in 1987, and formally converted to a cooperative in January 1990. From a savings and loan cooperative, it expanded to agribusiness in 1995. The business is currently focusing on pineapple production and by-product utilization (pineapple juice, dried pineapple, hand-woven pineapple cloth, handmade paper, and decorticated pineapple fibre).

With the support of FFP/ASEAN, LPMPC diversified the products (e.g. pineapple jam and jelly) and revived the decorticated fibre business. An export market for the pineapple fibre and additional local market outlets for the other products were established. With the additional market outlets, LPMPC created opportunities for its members to supply pineapple fruits and leaves. The number of supplying family farmers grew from 93 in 2014 to 431 in 2016 (+360 per cent) and the surface grew from 16 hectares in 2014 to 211 hectares in 2016 (a 13-fold increase).

With the increased sale of transformed product, LPMPC created employment opportunities for non-agricultural activities. Currently 38 women and 33 youngsters have found a reliable source of income as sub-contractors for LPMPC, doing hand scrapping and fibre knotting.

With its history as a savings and loans cooperative in mind, LPMPC combines the volume increase for its members with adapted financial services. An example of an adapted financial product is the agri-loan for pineapple and vegetables. Also, non-financial services like business trainings and exchange visits are organized.

Despite the effort of combining the creation of market outlets with financial and non-financial services, a consistent supply of good-quality pineapple products remains a challenge for LPMPC.

<sup>5</sup> See web reference AIN 6111 on agro-info.net: [http://agro-info.net/?menu=projects&view=project&project\\_id=25172](http://agro-info.net/?menu=projects&view=project&project_id=25172).

## **Component 4: MTCP2 Programme management**

Regarding key programme management evolutions that occurred in 2016:

- As per MTR recommendation, the programme started operating under a two-tier management arrangement. The subregional functions for South Asia and South-East Asia have been uploaded to RIA, while PIFON is remaining SRIA for the Pacific. To support its operations, funds allotted for SRIA will be used to hire additional programme staff who will be lodged in AFA office in Manila, for more efficient coordination.
- Towards the end of 2016, NIAs were encouraged to plan for the remaining years of the project – 1.5 years for South Asia, and 2.5 years for South-East Asia. NIAs are guided to underscore commodity plans and identify clear targets for value chain on priority crops. Discussion to design the third phase of MTCP will also take place in 2017, where commodity plans and value chain plans would possibly be considered.

Other key programme management activities were:

- The planning and active participation of NIAs, SRIAs and RIA in the midterm review mission;
- Projects visits undertaken mostly to retool the NIAs on knowledge management, M&E, financial management and programme management; and
- Partnership development and networking at the subregional level included partnership with the ASEAN Foundation, GAFSP, developing linkages between PIFON, SPC and IFAD, and attendance at the 2016 Farmers' Forum in Rome.



# Stories from MTCP2

Component 1:  
Strengthening farmers'  
organizations and  
their networks

In China, availability of arable land per capita is one of the lowest in the world, and traditional small-scale production has been difficult to adapt to the commercial development of agriculture in the context of economic globalization. However, one effective way to deal with this problem is to support the development of farmers' organizations.

With the support of the MTCP and MTCP2 programmes, the Agricultural Management Institute of China (AMI) has provided professional guidance and consultancy services to Chinese farmers' cooperatives for the past six years. Tens of thousands of cooperatives have taken part in technical training, policy dialogue, production and marketing, and other activities organized by AMI.

Kou Hongyan is the leader of the Good for Farmers Cooperative of Beijing. "I have benefited a lot from participating in activities organized by AMI," she reports. "For instance, I learned not only practical planting technology from the Farmers' Cooperatives Leaders Capacity Building Training, but also skills to enhance product value. Now we have built up our own apple brand, which greatly boosted prices for farmer members."



# -building pays dividends for farmers' cooperatives





# A seed bank to unite and support farmers in Bangladesh



When MTCP2 was launched in Bangladesh, one of the focus group discussions took place in the district of Bhola, which looks out onto the Bay of Bengal. This is an area where farmers are regularly hit by floods and often sustain very expensive losses of seeds. Local farmers took the opportunity to tell their troubles to staff from the COAST Trust – MTCP2’s national implementing agency in Bangladesh – and as a result, it was decided that a community seed bank would be established in the district.

During the initial phase, MTCP2 supported the production of the seed bank’s operations manual, which helps the community run the bank democratically. A committee has been established to manage the seed bank, and has in turn assigned one of its members to look after the bank. The system works like a real money bank: members can both deposit and borrow seeds. Sometimes members pay by returning even larger amounts of seed than they borrowed (in a departure from the official policy, which states that they are required to return only the same amount). Transactions are recorded and registered systematically, and stock is held permanently to help local farmers in case of emergency. Now that the seed bank is up and running, MTCP2 regularly conducts visits to monitor progress and provide support, if needed.

In addition, the seed bank serves as an information centre. It is equipped with a computer, a multi-media projector and other ICT materials so that farmers can watch information videos on agriculture. The equipment was provided by the government, thanks to the facilitation provided by COAST.

Akhter Hossain, president of the seed bank management committee, sums up what the bank means for the community: “Bhola is a disaster-prone area. Many times we lost all of our seeds due to disaster, but today we are confident since we farmers are now working together. We are confident due to this bank. We deposit seeds when we have them and we know that during any disaster we will be able help ourselves, and we will be able to help each other.”



©IFAD/Maksudur Rahman



PIFON has undertaken a scoping study on the current status of National Farmer Organizations (NFOs) in Timor-Leste, and on the opportunities for engagement with PIFON. A local consultant was hired to carry out this work in consultation with the Timorese Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and other relevant stakeholders. The scoping report identified that thousands of “informal” farmer groups have been established and supported to some extent by government and aid partners over the years. Of these many informal organizations, there are five larger organizations with formal registration which have been recognized for their good service delivery to members. These are: (i) ANAPROFIKO (ANA for short) – which is the National Association of Commercial Seed Producers in Timor-Leste; (ii) CCT (Cooperative Café Timor) – CCT is not an NFO but is the largest coffee producers’ cooperative in Timor-Leste; (iii) Federasaun Pescas Arturo (FPA) (a network of five fishing cooperatives on Arturo Island); (iv) UNAER (a network of eight coffee cooperatives); and (v) CSALT, which is the marketing arm of 30 cooperatives.

A simple scoring system was used to evaluate each NFO’s need and preparedness for PIFON support. ANAPROFIKO is the best prepared (and the most “deserving”) NFO in Timor-Leste. This NFO: (i) is registered; (ii) has a functional Board; (iii) has good current support (from SoL), but this will end in June 2016; (iv) has a national scope; and (v) is charging a membership fee. ANAPROFIKO’s subjective score was 31, compared with scores of 26 for CCT and FPA.

ANAPROFIKO became a member of the Pacific Island Farmers Organization Network in May 2016. Following a series of consultation meetings and a scoping mission by the PIFON Manager, Kyle Stice, it was agreed that PIFON would request for Timor-Leste to be an expansion country under the IFAD/SDC Medium-term Cooperation Program Phase II (MTCP II), with ANAPROFIKO as the National Implementing Agency (NIA). This proposal was agreed by the MTCP II Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting in Laos (June 2016). The signing of the LOA between ANAPROFIKO-TL and PIFON was completed on 1 August 2016. A total of

## PIFON’s partners





# process for expansion to Timor-Leste: Fruitful ship shows early results



FJD\$15,000 (US\$7,159.50) was transferred from PIFON to Timor-Leste on 30 August 2016 based on an agreed workplan and budget to be implemented from September to December 2016.

By the spring of 2017, ANAPROFIKO had successfully conducted a number of important activities to start off its engagement, including:

- Training for farmer groups in proposal writing;
- Training for farmers in seed quality control;
- Participation in seed learning exchange and open pollinated seed round table;
- Consultation meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries on seed quota and pricing; and
- Capacity-building for the ANAPROFIKO secretariat.

Over 220 farmers were directly involved in these activities – 151 men and 71 women. PIFON aims to expand the number of farmers' organizations that could benefit from MTCP2 and is gradually working to integrate these farmers' organizations into other ongoing development projects.

# **Stories from MTCP2**

Component 2:  
Supporting participation  
of farmers' organizations  
in policy processes



# China's big step in participation in policymaking





In China, important policy improvements were made for land, insurance, finance and human resource. These were submitted in four reports to the Ministry of Agriculture. Specific suggestions were brought forward to relevant departments concerning set-up of taxation items. Five policy dialogues were conducted: one was attended by 89 representatives from 89 cooperatives to modify the China Farmers' Cooperative Law; another discussed internal credit cooperation of farmers' cooperatives among 75 farmers from 73 cooperatives; two were attended by representatives from 58 cooperatives to discuss feedback and suggestions on existing policies; and one focused on cooperative financial management, and was attended by representatives from 27 cooperatives.

©IFAD/Jennifer Liu



During the first phase of the MTCP, an agreement was signed between IFAD and the Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU) and implemented from 2010 to 2015. This first term was successful in developing models of cooperation groups and cooperatives, building value chains, developing the capacity of farmers and staff, and strengthening VNFU's participation in policy formulation and feedback.

With the advent of MTCP2, it was a logical step to sign a new, more ambitious agreement. This agreement aims to build the capacity of VNFU staff and members at all levels, in four areas:

- Policy formulation, including research and studies that will aid in lobbying relevant authorities regarding policies that will suit the aspirations of farmers;
- Training and capacity-building in business planning, marketing, value chain development and management, and other topics;
- Implementation of the activities of the IFAD country programme, such as market orientation, developing value chains, sustainable agricultural models, services in agriculture and rural areas; and
- Development of producers' groups to provide economic services to their members, which include cooperatives and rural small enterprises, replicating and multiplying cooperative models, and participation in building rural cooperative economies together with relevant partners in the value chains and developing public-private partnership models.

At the signing ceremony, Lai Xuan Mon, VNFU President, affirmed that the signing of the second phase with IFAD country director Henning Pedersen, on 12 September 2016 would open a new chapter in the good cooperation between the two sides. The new agreement would also create favourable conditions for Vietnamese farmers through the driving force of capital, knowledge and skills for their production. Farmers would learn how to forecast for production and marketing; how to access markets and add value to their products; and how to move towards integration with farmers both in Asia and elsewhere in the world.

The new agreement came into effect in 2016 and will continue until 2020.



**Farmers' Union and IFAD country office in Viet Nam  
sign agreement in support of farmers**





## Bangladesh: Educating the public on the harmful effects of pesticide use



Use of pesticides in Bangladesh increased by six times from 1954 until 2010. A vegetable farmer uses pesticides around 150 times in one session. There are 377 pesticides that are still used in the country despite being banned in developed countries.

Umar Farukh of Charfssion Upazila in Bhola district is a village doctor by profession. He engaged in small-scale farming producing brinjal (eggplant) with the use of chemical insecticides. He gave up brinjal cultivation when he discovered the harmful effects of chemical insecticides on his family. After two years, he resumed farming, upon the motivation of COAST. Farukh discovered that the alternative technology is much more economical than to chemical pesticides. He spent only 1,680 taka (around US\$21.00) for his 40 decimal land (0.16 hectares) instead of 15,000 taka (around US\$188). He made a profit of 65,000 taka (around US\$817) last season. He is now providing training to other farmers on brinjal cultivation using sex pheromones.

MTCP2 farmers' organizations in partnership with COAST Trust held a press conference to educate the public on the harmful effects of excessive use of pesticides. Local media provided huge support, which caught the interest of the local agriculture department who eventually invited farmers to share their experience on alternative pesticides. MTCP2 supported the awareness-raising campaign, provided technical support to educate farmers on alternative farming systems through training, mobilization, community radio, leaflet distribution and liaising with government. At present, local people are using sex pheromones as an alternative to chemical pesticides.

Like Farukh, farmers care about their family and the community and would opt to use safe farming methods when alternatives are presented to them.





The Institute for Motivating Self-Employment (IMSE), a farmers' organization in West Bengal, is carrying out two major campaigns in support of farmers to enable them to keep the land they till and to use sustainable agriculture practices to make small-scale farming viable while protecting the environment. Village-level awareness camps were conducted to demonstrate the benefits of organic farming for farmers and the community. A parallel campaign was carried out to strengthen the Gram Sansad (village parliament).

Thanks to the assistance provided by MTCP2 since 2015, IMSE has undertaken several programmes advocating for sustainable agriculture and the promotion of self-governance in the Birbhum district of West Bengal. Meetings were held to raise awareness of environmentally harmful practices, such as the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which is linked to the commercial production of vegetables for large corporations. Farmers' groups and committees were formed in every village to protest against the "corporatization" of agriculture; they were joined by other civil society organizations and NGOs.

The campaigns include training of trainers programmes on organic farming, with practical applications so that farmers can test what they learn on limited areas of their farms. Some farmers hesitate to switch to organic farming as they are afraid their production will decline.

In 2016, IMSE decided to focus on marketing organic products. To facilitate this process, its members applied for recognition of their status as organic producers. This enables them to cater for the nearby Anganwadi Workers' Training Programme by supplying the organic rice, vegetables and pulses that hundreds of IMSE members produce. These products are then used for the district's midday meal programme.

The ongoing campaign is successfully educating farmers both on organic farming and on the disastrous effects of extensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The number of farmers adopting sustainable agriculture practices is on the increase.

## India: Org





anic agriculture nurtures the soil and feeds the community



Shri Ashok Mondal, 53 years old, is one of the farmer-participants of the orientation camp and trainings delivered by IMSE experts on sustainable agriculture. He produces his own organic fertilizer by setting up a compost pit in his backyard. He is cultivating eggplant and beans on his plot of 2.5 kathas (around 0.08 hectares). Mondal reports that very little investment is needed to apply sustainable agriculture methods. His initiative has served as a good example in the community, especially among marginalized peasants in Mohutar village. Many farmers are following his techniques.

His example has prompted others to come forward and step into his shoes. They are now helping each other in the preservation and exchange of local seeds and manure, and in learning sustainable agriculture production techniques.

# Stories from MTCP2

Component 3:  
Farmers' organization  
services and involvement  
in agricultural development  
programmes



Sok Houn and her husband, Tep Sok, live in Trok village, in the Svay Rieng province of Cambodia, with their four children. They used to raise chickens through traditional practices, and as a result many chickens died early.

In 2014, MTCP2 reached the village of Trok, facilitating training for local farmers in several areas through its national partner, the Cambodian Farmers' Association Federation of Agricultural Producers (CFAP). Sok Houn and her husband are members of the Family Economic Development Association (FEDA), which in turn is a member of CFAP, and which trained them in new chicken-raising techniques. Sok Houn is very happy, and says: "Now I know how to raise chickens with low-risk techniques. I know how to produce organic chicken feed by using existing materials around my house and the village, so I save money, and my chickens also grow faster than before. At the start of the project I had five hens and a rooster, and now I have 20 chickens."

As well as growing faster, her organic chickens also sell at the higher price of 15,000 riels/kg (US\$3.75/kg), compared with 12,000 riels/kg (US\$3/kg).

She is also diversifying her income because she is worried about the long dry spells brought on by climate change. "I also grow rice and vegetables, and have a few cows as insurance against drought or when we need additional income to support the family. It is very important for rural and smallholder farmers to diversify incomes to support the family," she added. "Because of this I can provide for the family in difficult times".

# Better pr heavier a



**actices and organic feed lead to healthier,  
nd more profitable chickens in Cambodia**





**All-round coffee production training leads to all-round benefits for Indonesian community**





The Sridonoretno Farmers' Association, in the region of East Java, Indonesia, has benefited extensively from the joint support provided by the ASEAN Farmers' Organizations Support Programme (AFOSP) in collaboration with MTCP2.

Robusta coffee is one of the most important local products, and the AFOSP and MTCP2 have jointly facilitated extensive capacity-building initiatives, including on the cultivation of climate-resilient coffee through natural farming and natural pest management practices, harvesting techniques that lead to the selection of the highest-quality cherries, post-harvest processing, setting up collective processing units, and developing a network of new markets through coffee shops in Malang, Malang City and Batu City.

The capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives have translated, even before a change in practices, into a change of mentality behind those practices. As Mr Siadi, Head of Quality Control for the Sridonoretno Association of Dampit Coffee Farmers, says: "We are now aware of the importance for coffee farmers to practise red cherry picking and good post-harvest processing." Eko Yudi Sukrianto, leader of the Association, backed him up: "Through the training that we received, we are now able to rate the quality of our coffee, which now yields up to 90 per cent red cherry and is deemed enough to proceed to coffee bean processing."

The results are impressive: coffee production increased by 200 per cent, from 0.5 kg to 1.5 kg of green beans per tree; fungi diseases have decreased; coffee quality has improved; farmers' profits have increased from 22,000 to 32,000 rupiahs per kilo of green beans; and the participation of women and youth is on the rise. Women are mainly in charge of coffee bean sorting, while the youth work in quality control, marketing and cooperative development.

New technologies are proving more helpful every day, even when it comes to applications like rural agriculture. One such example is IFA Krishi, an Android-based mobile application platform that provides a host of useful information to farmers: agriculture news, fertilizer calculations, information on pests/diseases and their remedies, and a tool to post instant enquiries in the farmer forum, seek solutions from experts, and find market prices and trader information on various markets. Farmers can also receive notifications about opportunities posted by government and other organizations.

MTCP2 promotes value chain development and market linkages through ICTs and connects farmers with market traders and agriculture experts, and therefore jumped at the chance of supporting farmers in using this tool. Overall, MTCP2 supports approximately 200 individuals (both individual farmers and farmers' groups, including youth, Dalits, women and indigenous farmers) in agricultural production and marketing through these means.

One of the benefiting farmers' groups in Nepal is led by a woman named Tika Bastola. In 2014, her group established the Rita Mausami Krishi Farm in Dhapakhel village, Lalitpur, with a financial investment of 2 million rupees (about US\$19,500). They produce 15 tons of tomatoes and 15,000 kg of other vegetables per season.

According to Bastola: "The weather forecast and market price information from IFA Krishi is a big help to us. We can check the best prices using the IFA Krishi app. Besides the weather forecast and market prices, we also get information on using organic fertilizer, vitamins and pesticides."

Since they started using the application, the farm has increased its vegetable production by nearly 20 per cent.






pp makes access to information dramatically simpler





# Sri Lanka: Ecological farming gives jobs and healthy vegetables to the community





“We lost all our resources due to the war. Now we do not have jobs to earn money. Farming is our only source of livelihood – and our only alternative is ecological agriculture, which does not require money for inputs.” These are the words of a farmer in Vavuniya, in northern Sri Lanka.

He is part of a group of 20 men and 30 women (20 per cent of whom are young people) who turned to farming when they could not find jobs once the civil war ended. Unfortunately, the long war and the extensive use of agrochemicals had destroyed the environment and had a massive impact on the health of local farmers; many of them were suffering from chronic kidney disease. A farmer from the community said: “Today, our farmers, especially the men, are dying of kidney disease. We found out that this is due to extensive use of agrochemicals over a long period of time. It is therefore time for us to shift to alternative agricultural practices.”

In 2016, these 50 farmers started farming using organic practices. Through the MTCP2 programme, the local farmers’ organization provided them with seeds and plants and conducted awareness-raising workshops on ecological farming.

While it is still too early to note any considerable increase in income, the farmers are now saving money that they would have spent on farming inputs had they continued farming using common practices, and their families are consuming safe, chemical-free vegetables at home.

The next challenge lies in marketing their organic produce and this is what the local farmers’ organization will tackle now.



PIFON signed a ground-breaking declaration of commitment with IFAD to enhance its engagement with farmers' organizations in the region.

The declaration was signed at a ceremony in November 2016, by Afamasaga Toleafoa, PIFON Chairman, and Ronald Hartman, IFAD Country Programme Manager. "This is the first official declaration of this type between IFAD and farmers' organizations anywhere in the world. We are very proud to have established this partnership, which will allow for greater impacts of our programmes down to the smallholder farmers of the Pacific," said Hartman. The declaration represents an agreement between the two organizations on the important role of farmers' organizations in agricultural development in the region. Specifically, the declaration will:

- Enhance connections between similar PIFON and IFAD activities;
- Increase opportunities for both parties to complement each other's programmes;
- Establish better networks among IFAD and PIFON members;
- Develop policies, strategies and/or programmes that will afford mutual benefits for members; and

PIFON and IFAD agree that a relationship between the two organizations provides many opportunities to bring the voice of farmers in the region to policymakers and planners, and that both parties will continue to explore opportunities to capitalize on this relationship, such as the IFAD Farmers' Forum.

IFAD sig



# ns declaration of commitment with PIFON





**PIFON's triangle exchanges and technical trainings to value chain, specific farming practices, and organization**





## FOs on al issues



©IFAD/Peter Klaer, Tei Tei Tavauuni

Organizing triangle exchange visits with technical trainings to FOs is a central service PIFON is developing for its members. The overall idea is to, on the one hand, promote specific knowledge and experience of some farmers' organizations in different areas to host the exchanges and technical trainings, and on the other hand, to help organizations with less experience in those areas to go on visits to learn from those existing good practices.

During the first half of implementation of MTCP2, 14 learning and exchange visits were organized in six Pacific Islands and in two South-East Asian countries. These technical exchanges involved approximately 550 participants (including 200 women, 40 per cent, and 100 youth, 18 per cent) from 40 farmers' organizations (all six NIAs, but also 34 additional farmers' organizations within or outside the PIFON network); thus, about 2.2 per cent of members enjoyed direct benefits from training. Below are highlights of some of these visits and their benefits and positive outcomes for the participants:

**Tonga on papaya production:** a technical exchange was carried out between Tonga and Fiji in April 2015, which included a series of trainings on papaya production, costs and returns and value chain aspects. This training exchange was conducted by a commercial papaya farmer member of NWC/Fiji to the benefit of farmers' organizations in Tonga, including its NIA, the Growers Federation of Tonga (GroFed). This initial training was supported by MTCP2 and led to three additional visits that the Tonga farmers' organizations funded with other resources. The Tonga farmers have now quite advanced in developing their own value chain in papaya production.

**Samoa on pineapple production:** in 2014, PIFON initiated a farmer-to-farmer technical exchange visit production from Samoa to Fiji on year-round pineapple production and to provide information for farmers interested in establishing exports of pineapple from Samoa to New Zealand. A follow-up visit that was then organized in November 2015 and provided advice

on practical solutions to secure continued development. The impacts recorded from this activity can already be seen on some pineapple farms in Samoa, including: (i) the natural cycle being broken on a number of farms, (ii) 65,000 – 70,000 plants being planted in stages and now ready to produce off-season fruit before the 2016 natural pineapple season in November/December 2016.

**Fiji on vanilla production:** as the NIA of Fiji for MTCP2, TTT has identified training needs that were to meet a strategic objective: providing support to its farmer members to diversify their crops as they have historically been focusing on cash crops like dalo and kava. This is why representatives from TTT and TRTC went on a scoping tour to Spices of Fiji, Wainadoi, to investigate the possibility of farming spices on Taveuni. As a result, demonstration plots were set up in Taveuni to showcase techniques to a large number of farmers.









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ISBN 978-92-9072-780-4

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Cover photo: ©IFAD/Susan Beccio

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October 2017