



12th Governing Board Meeting of SAC



Director, SAC delivering welcome address

All governing board members

The inaugural ceremony of the 12th Governing Board (GB) Meeting of SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) was held on 23 October 2018 at 6:30pm at Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Mr. Md. Nasiruzzaman, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Mr. Md. Samsul Haque, Director-General (SAARC & BIMSTEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh and Ms. Ishrat Jahan, Director (ARD), SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu, Nepal present as the Special Guests. At the outset, Dr. S. M. Bokhtiar, Director, SAC delivered welcome address in the occasion. The Honorable Governing Board members from SAARC Member States graced the occasion. Besides, the inaugural session was attended by high officials from Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives from the diplomatic missions of SAARC Member States, head of NARS institutes and other invitees from different stakeholder organizations. The inaugural function was chaired by Mr. Ugyen Penjore, Director General, Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Thimphu, Bhutan & Chairman, Governing Board of the Centre. Dr S.M.Bokhtiar, Director, SAC extended a warm welcome to Mr.Ugyen Penjore, and thanked him for presiding over the inaugural ceremony. He welcomed Mr. Mohammad Nasiruzzaman, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh as Chief Guest, Mr Md Shamsul Haque, Director General (SAARC and BIMSTEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Bangladesh, esteemed GB Members and other distinguished guests present in the Inaugural Session. He highlighted the activities of SAC and the role of SAC in research and development and dissemination of technologies across the member countries. He underlined the significance of the 12th GB Meeting in regards to reviewing of previous activities and formulating future programs and addressing emerging challenges in the agriculture and allied disciplines in South Asia.

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He emphasized that SAC is making efforts to enhance collaboration with national, regional and international partners in order to enhance the quality of programs, increase the visibility of the SAC and minimize costs.

Ms. Ishrat Jahan, Director, SAARC Secretariat conveyed the warm greetings and best wishes on behalf of H.E.Mr.Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General of SAARC for successful holding of the 12th GB meeting of SAARC Agriculture Centre. She extended special gratitude to GB Members for attending the meeting. She also thanked the Director of the Centre, all the Professional and Staff Members of the Centre for their hard work over the years to turn this centre as the Centre of Excellence. She highlighted that given the importance of Agriculture in the livelihood and economies of the South Asia, since its inception SAARC has identified agriculture and food security as one of the major areas of cooperation among the Member States and successive SAARC Summits have underscored the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring food and nutritional security. She emphasized that SAC needs to pay increasing focus on more innovative programmes, including on non-crop sectors like Livestock, Fisheries and value chain development. She highlighted that in line with the directives and guidance of the Higher SAARC Bodies, SAC has been giving efforts to implement focused and result-oriented joint projects through regional collaboration and partnership with different international organizations and specialized bodies. She sought the support and guidance of the GB Members in taking forward the mandate of SAC.

Mr. Md Shamsul Haque, Director General as the Special Guest, highlighted that SAC has long been considered a "Centre of Excellence". He emphasized that agriculture including livestock and fishery continues to be an important and vibrant sector of South Asian economies, despite faster growth of industrial and service sectors. He also emphasized on having collaboration among the SAARC Member States for value chain development. He finally conveyed his best wishes for the successful conducting of the SAC GB meeting. Mr. Mohammad Nasiruzzaman, highlighted the contribution of SAC for addressing the issues of poverty and hunger, which are being targeted by Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations by 2030. He emphasized to develop formal sharing mechanism of innovative and smart agricultural technologies among the SAARC Member States. He acknowledged the active involvement of SAC towards grass root level poverty alleviation through agricultural research, development and policy intervention.

Mr.Ugyen Penjore, highlighted that SAC has been evolving over the years as one of the leading regional centres under the umbrella of SARRC. Furthermore, he appreciated SAC's increased networking with many regional and international organizations during recent years. He conveyed his sincere gratitude on behalf of SAC GB to all partner organizations. Finally, he conveyed his appreciation to Director, SAC, regionally recruited professionals, and other staff for the significant achievements made by SAC.

Some Important Recommendations of 12th GB Meeting held on 24-25 October 2018 at SAC

- The GB commented on the achievements of SAC in 2018 and noted that SAC successfully conducted 15 programs out of 25 programs as per the approved calendar of activities. GB appreciated the SAC's engagement and collaboration with development partners. With regard to the concerns expressed by GB regarding incomplete programs of 2018, Director, SAC clarified the constraints in their implementation and informed that five programs will be conducted by December 2018. However, five programs cannot be implemented during the year 2018. The GB recommended that the higher bodies of SAARC reconsider allocation of budget for airfare for participants attending SAC programs/activities.
- GB suggested to reconstitute/update the editorial board members of SAARC Journal of Agriculture.
- GB suggested that as far as possible, the venue of the programs may be uniformly distributed among all the Member States- considering the essential requirements for organizing and conducting such programs.
- GB recommended the celebration of SAARC Charter day in collaboration with SARSO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SAARC Division) of Bangladesh as a joint event to avoid duplication of efforts and events and to rationalize the budget expenditure.
- GB appreciated the efforts made by SAC to partner with international institutions/organizations towards effective implementations of programs.

- The proposed “Youth in Agriculture program” should be included under PSPD and merged with the program on Women in Agriculture and the upcoming IPNS program may be conducted in appropriate countries that have sufficient expertise in the relevant area (India or Pakistan).
- GB suggested to explore the premier institutions in the region where facilities of specialized laboratories are available for executing training programs. MoU may be developed between SAC and external development partners before initiating collaborative programmes/activities between SAC& such collaborative partners. In case of any deviation, GB, must be apprised for obtaining necessary approvals.
- The program on Value chain be shifted to the Horticulture sector and the programme on bio-safety may be shifted to the crop sector programmes.

56th Programming Committee Meeting of SAARC



The Fifty-Six Session of the Programming Committee (PC) meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 11-12 December 2018. The Meeting was attended by all the Member States. In accordance with the SAARC practice, The meeting was opened by the Chair of PC, Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal. In his opening remarks, Mr. Bhattarai extended a very warm welcome to all the participants of the meeting and wished a safe and comfortable stay in Kathmandu. He reiterated that in order to fulfill the objectives as enshrined in the Charter and meets the demand of our people, all SAARC mechanisms and processes should be reenergized and expedited to make each of them more efficient, effective and result oriented.. He also expressed his sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General of SAARC and his entire team for excellent preparatory arrangements including documentation of the Meeting.

H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Secretary General of SAARC extended a very welcome to the distinguished delegates of the Member States and the Heads of the Specialized Bodies and SAARC Regional Centres. He briefed the Committee on the progress made since the Fifty-third Session of the PC held in Katmandu, on 11-12 December 2017. He also thanked the Member States for extending their unflinching support and cooperation in the tenure of his responsibilities in the past three years. He concluded his remarks by wishing the meeting great success. The Committee appreciated the excellent work done by the SAARC Agriculture Centre in carrying out the proposed activities during 2017. The Committee directed that the Centre should also focus on conducting trainings/workshops other than Expert Group level activities. The proposed need based program approved by 56 PC for SAARC Agriculture Centre of 2019.



Dr. S.M. Bokhtiar presenting on SAC

General Observations/ Recommendations by the 56th Programming Committee

- The regional Centres/Specialized Bodies should seek concurrence of Member States before signing of MoUs with other organizations and International partners;
- The Regional Centres/Specialized Bodies should convene their Governing Board meetings in a timely manner and submit reports to NFPs through Secretariat two months prior to the PC Session;
- Reiterated its earlier recommendations that activities funded through external sources must be reflected in the budget with the names of the funding agencies and contributions details for programme activities; and should obtain concurrence of the Member States;
- The Secretariat will re-circulate the approved format for the Governing board Reports of the SAARC Regional Centres for strict compliance;
- Reiterated its earlier recommendations that the SAARC Regional centres/bodies must submit a chart showing comparative budget for the last five years as provided in the Guidelines for SAARC Regional Centres;
- The committee directed the Secretariat to carry out a study regarding re- designation of the posts in the SAARC Regional centres/Bodies with implications and rationale for the consideration of the next session of PC;

- The SAARC Regional Centres/Bodies should explore the possibility organizing their Programme and activities in all Member States;
- Non-response of a Member State on an issue should not be construed as "approval". The explicit approval of the Member States should be obtained;
- The SAARC Specialized Bodies/Regional Centres should formulate effective and result-oriented programmes;
- The zero-growth increase in the budget means the "reason based zero-growth considering the inflation in the region;
- The committee directed the specialized Bodies/Regional centres to submit comprehensive reports about their activities and programmes during the 2018, reflecting, but not limited to, their overall performance and challenges faced, to the SAARC Secretariat by 31 March 2019 for submission to Member States.

SAC Celebrated 34th SAARC Charter Day

The SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), and South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO) jointly organized the 34th SAARC Charter Day on 08th December 2018 at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Farmgate, Dhaka. The Charter Day celebrated with several important events like flags hoisting, release of pigeons and balloons, and release of the books published by SAC. Mr. Mohammad Nazmul Islam, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque, Director General (SAARC & BIMSTEC) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was present as a Special Guest. The function was chaired by Dr. Md. Kabir Ikramul Haque, Member, Governing Board of the SAARC Agriculture Centre and Executive Chairman, BARC. Dr. S. M. Bokhtiar, Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre gave welcome remarks to all dignitaries, guests and participants in the SAARC Charter Day. A number of officials from NARS Institutions, BARC, FAO, Action Aid, Asian Farmer Association,

DAE, BADC, IRRI, CIMMYT, CIRDAP, KGF who have been intimately working with SAC were also present as special invitees. SAC and SARSO were presented on their activities in the occasion.



Guests on the dais



Chief guest releasing of ballon and pigeon

Regional Expert Consultation Meeting on “ICTs for Development of Rural Agriculture in South Asia – Policy Concerns”

The SAARC Regional Expert Consultation meeting on “ICTs for Development of Rural Agriculture in South Asia – Policy Concerns” was conducted at Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogura, Bangladesh on 29-31 October 2018 subsequent to the approval of 11th SAC GB and 54th PC, SAARC Agriculture Centre. The expert consultation meeting was jointly organized by the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka, Bangladesh and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), Rural Development Academy (RDA) with objectives:

1. To learn current status of application of ICTs in rural agriculture;
2. To promote networking, linkages and exchanges between experts in ICT in agriculture;
3. To review prevailing policies for use of ICT in rural agriculture;
4. To propose policies and strategies for sustainable use of ICT in rural agriculture development.

An inaugural function of the consultation meeting was held on 29 October 2018 at RDA. Mr. Md. Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque,

Director General (SAARC & BIMSTEC) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Dr. Nargis Jahan, Acting Director General, RDA presided over the inaugural session. Mr. Tomasi V Raiyawa, Acting Director General CIRDAP, was also present in the inaugural session as Guest of honour. Dr. S. M. Bokhtiar, Director, SAC welcomed all dignitaries, guests and participants in the seminar. Dr. Md. Yunus Ali, Senior Technical Officer, SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) coordinated the program and led the SAARC delegation to Bangladesh. The Faculties of RDA and professionals from SAARC Member States, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the consultation meeting. LAO PDR from CIRDAP Countries participated in the meeting. During the three days program, Six Member Countries presented the country status report on the issue. Apart from the consultation meeting, the delegates got opportunity to visit different ICT in agriculture village model. After elaborate discussions, a good set of recommendations were made on different thematic areas for further intervention.



Group photo of the MSs participant



Chief Guest delivering speech

Major recommendations to implement ICTs for development of rural agriculture

Policy

- Availability of sustainable and reliable agricultural Information need to be included at policy level
- Capacity enhancement of women in agriculture in ICT need to be included
- Mandated Committee for Agricultural content validation and program monitoring need to be established and include it at policy level
- Policies formulation for implementing ICTs for rural agricultural development

Program and initiatives

- Availability – to develop infrastructural setup of ICT.
- Sustainability – to ensure institutionalization of the policy e.g. primary data collection, research, apps development, capacity building.
- Reliability – to formulate technical advisory committee.
- Gender specific & sensitive agro information creation and dissemination
- Strengthen Public Private Partnership for collaboration
- Agricultural Product cluster (high value fruits, perishables, grains etc) and target group (farmers, women, youth, agro entrepreneurs) specific programs and initiatives should be designed for
- ICT capacity building
- Communication
- Awareness building
- Creating business advisory service provision
- Value addition
- Postharvest management,
- Branding
- Certification etc.

Strategies

- Sort out precise information and ensure dissemination of that information to the TARGET audiences
- Categories appropriate ICT solutions for all constraints faced by Farmers
- Monitoring and Evaluation of programs/initiatives need to be carried out in regular interval
- Subsidized Smartphones, sims and mobile packages for female farmers
- Bundle packages with agro information services especially in post harvest times when more are required and available
- Prepare a very comprehensive digital database of agro-based information which need to be updated daily, weekly, monthly based on the content category

Immediate term:

- Engage all stakeholders and identify the gaps that can be met by applying ICT

Medium term:

- Set up committees, come up with innovative ideas in equipping stakeholders
- Piloting the ideas and concentrating on results
- Installing a monitoring and feedback mechanism

Long Term:

- Sustainable Business Model development for interventions involving ICT in agriculture

Actions

- Develop connectivity of internet, mobile and other sorts of communication technology
- Build research institutions, data bank, user friendly applications (in terms of print, media, software, etc.)
- Frame guideline from advisory committee
- Identify content that women in agriculture would like to receive through ICT tools
- A committee should be created that will be reflective of relevant stakeholders cross cutting sectors
- Country specific dialogue involving multi stakeholder groups
- Focal person/group from each country exchange ideas remotely and periodically
- Regional discussion and exchange for implementation and adaptation

Agricultural Technologies in South Asia “Formulation of Enabling Policy Recommendations and Project Concept for Popularization of Innovative”

Regional Expert Consultation meeting on “Formulation of Enabling Policy Recommendations and Project Concept for Popularization of Innovative Agricultural Technologies in South Asia” was conducted at Galadari Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28-31 October, 2018. The meeting was jointly organized by the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka, Bangladesh and Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) of Sri Lanka supported by WINROCK International and Access Agriculture.

The objectives:

- To identify innovative agricultural technologies
- To review the policy initiatives and business models for popularization and commercialization of small and medium scale agricultural technologies and innovative technologies
- To prepare a project proposal and plan of actions for establishing of SAARC Innovation Platform

The consultation meeting was divided into three sessions: (1) inaugural (2) technical, and (3) group work for recommendations.

Inaugural session

Inaugural Session was started at 9:00 am in the conference room of Hotel Galadari on 28 October 2018 with the tradition lap lighting. Mr. William Sparks, Winrock International presided over the session.

Welcome address was delivered by Ms. Kanchana Wickramasinghe, Research Economist, IPS, Sri Lanka. Dr. Amitha Benthota, country coordinator, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Former Director Rice Research Institute, Sri Lanka graced the occasion as Chief Guest. A presentation on innovative technologies was delivered by Dr. Ahmad Salahuddin, Consultant, Access Agriculture. Dr. Nasreen Sultana, Senior Program Specialist, (Horticulture) presented the inaugural speech on behalf of SAC and Ms. Nimesha Dissanayake, Research Assistant, IPS made the vote of thanks. Dr. Spark provided an overview of innovation platform formulation process. Whole program was coordinated by Fatema Nasrin Jahan, Senior Program Officer, SAC, Dhaka.

Technical Session

The first technical session was chaired by the consultant Dr. Punya Prasad Regmi, Adjunct Professor, Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU), Nepal. In this session, three country papers were presented by the focal persons of Afganistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan. The first country paper was presented by Mr. Sabawoon Chakhansuri, Acting Director of Statistics and Information System,

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Kabul, Afghanistan followed by the presentation made by Mr. Abdul Jalil Deputy Chief (Policy Planning), Planning, Project Implementation, ICT wing, DAE, Dhaka, Bangladesh and Mr. Ngawang Ngawang, Program Director, Agriculture Research & Development Center (ARDC), Sarpang, South Bhutan. After each presentation, participants took part in open discussion on the topic. The second technical session was held after lunch. Dr. Govinda Prasad Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Department, Nepal and Dr. RSK Keerthisena Assistant Director General of Agriculture (Research), Department of Agriculture Peradeniya, Sri Lanka presented their country papers sequentially.

In the third technical session, on 30 October, 2018, Dr. Regmi made the presentation on behalf of Maldives, India and Pakistan. Mr. Gasith Mohamed Agriculture Officer, Fisheries Management Section, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Male has sent country paper of Maldives. Dr. Regmi, also presented some promising agro technologies of India and Pakistan during his consolidated presentation on innovative agro-technologies in eight SAARC countries.

Group Work and Recommendations

Group work was designed to accumulate ideas by brainstorming of SAARC country representatives to establish a regional agriculture innovation platform. Group was facilitated by Mr William spark. To facilitate the brainstorming process Mr. Spark divided the whole process in four steps, (1) Sourcing, (2) Validation, (3) Scaling and (4) Platform

He also has divided participants into three groups and asked each group to write at least five ideas in five separate pieces of paper. Hence, there were altogether 15 ideas for each step. Then he asked each participant to vote three ideas what he/she though most important/relevant/efficient to establish the platform. After voting, Mr. Spark organized ideas based on the similarities.

SOURCES

It can be any forum/organization/individual from where innovative technologies can be collected/accumulate for the platform. After voting, consultant organized the ideas in three categories:

Global source

1. Establishing a global Network
2. Identifying validated innovation sources, such as videos of Access Agriculture, and knowledge hub in different countries of the world;

3. Participating SAARC in different global events/organizing Global outreach activity (organizing innovation fair), Creating SAARC Innovation-pedia

Regional source

1. Funding opportunity for IR
2. Organizing exhibitions to showcase technologies in the region

In-country source

1. In country workshop with farmers and other actors are the primary source of innovation;
2. Annual technical pitching
3. Collections/documentations of in country consultation/ workshop including all stakeholders of agricultural system and compilation the information and share

Other sources

1. Exposure visit/ Seminar/Workshop
2. Innovative technology website
3. Accumulation of innovative stories from media sources and compile them for further validation and use
4. Catalogue of innovative technologies
5. Asking centre of excellence in research (e.g. CPD, IRRI, CIMMYT) to share region or country specific innovations and make a regional innovation innovative bank.

VALIDATE

In this stage, promising innovative agro technologies will be prioritized and validated.

Prioritizing

1. Prioritization of innovations through multi-stakeholder consultation meetings (In country/region)
2. Platform provide the standard protocol for validation
3. Create the validation network list (University, research station, Private sector, NGO)

Demonstrating

1. On farm trials
2. On station trials and fine tuning
3. Conducting adaptive research with farmers through lead actions
4. Ecologically identified regions are selected for pilot testing innovations

Secondary data

1. Reports from the original source of technology/testing in country

Third party engagement

1. Platform provide fund for third party to validate the technology
2. Economic, Social (gender, youth) and environmental assessment

3. Market opportunity and sustainability
4. Collection of evidence from secondary sources regarding sources and innovations
5. Country's policy compliance
6. Platform provide the technical expert
7. Identification and selection of innovation based on countries needs through Eol.



SCALE

In this step, validated technologies will be piloted in SAARC countries for adoption.

Through government support

1. Policy influencing to individual (for example subsidy), Government or other related organizations
2. Establishing linkages between cells, national, regional institutions

Promotional activities

1. Organizing promotional activities
2. Marketing through the local channel (TV, Radio, Newspaper)
3. Production and dissemination of technologies through Media
4. Success story of technologies to the farmers

Organizing Training

1. Training of Trainer (ToT)- Developing master trainers (Agencies of government and private entrepreneurs)
2. Organizing training, workshop or stakeholder meeting
3. Exposure visit/training
4. Three months free trial of technology/ Guarantee money back if not satisfied

Other ideas

1. Identification of focal agency in respective countries Agri Ministry (Planning and Policy Division)
2. Design specialized (Phd program focusing innovative technology)
3. Success use of technology by farmers or Govt. (free seed, fertilizer etc.)
4. Organizing market place for innovation fair for inviting donor /development partners/ research/university/ Farmers organization etc.

PLATFORM

Five components (5 Ss) of platform: (1) Strategy, (2) Structure, (3) Systems, (4) Staffing, (5) Status

Engagement

1. Vision. Mission, Goal, Objective should be clearly defined.
2. Strengthening Policy commitment among the SAARC Member States.
3. Establish national agricultural innovation platform (multistakeholders)
4. Steering committee should be established.
5. Members should be included from all stakeholders groups, such as research, extension, farmers' organization, private sector, NGOs etc.
6. SAARC Innovation Platform can be constituted by the representatives of each SAARC MS.

Communication

1. Establish proper, sustainable communicative system (focal point in each country)

Measures

1. Monitoring and Evaluation Division

Way forward

After group works, for compilation of all documents of this meeting and to proceed further, following deadlines were set:

1. 15th November 2018: Submission of final version of country paper by focal persons to Consultant and SAC.
2. 30th November, 2018: Submission workshop report and complied country papers to SAC and Widrock International
3. 31st December, 2018: Finalization the project proposal
4. January 2019: Submission of the project proposal to SDF or USAID for SAARC establishing Agriculture Innovation platform

Sight Seeing

On 31 October, the whole group visited to Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and around the city of historical places of Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Different activities in the consultation meeting

SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Policy Framing on Transboundary Fish Diseases and Their Control Measures in South Asia’

SAARC Agriculture centre (SAC) has organized a SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Policy Framing on Transboundary Fish Diseases and Their Control Measures in South Asia’ in Paro, Bhutan during 7-9 November 2018. The program was jointly organized by the SAC, Dhaka and National Research and Development Centre for Aquaculture (NR&DCA), Gelephu, Department of Livestock (DoL), Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF), Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB). Dr. Shiba Shankar Giri, Senior Program Specialist (Fisheries), SAC, Dhaka was the program coordinator and led the SAARC delegation to Bhutan. The National Focal-point Experts of the SAARC member countries, Dr. Zillur Rahman of Bangladesh, Mr. Drukpol of Bhutan, Dr. Neeraj Sood of India, Mr. Jageswar Yadav of Nepal, Mr. Shah Kakar Faisal of Pakistan, Mr. Palitha Chandrarathana of Sri Lanka and Dr S. S. Giri of SAC were in the delegation. Mr Pema Thinley, LPO, NR&DCA was the local coordinator of the consultation meeting.



Group photo of the MSs participant



The objectives of these three days regional consultation were: to increase understanding of the current status of fish and crustacean diseases, quarantine, surveillance, monitoring, diagnosis, research and training in SAARC member countries; to prioritize areas of collaboration and partnerships for managing TAAPs/TAADs of regional importance involving international experts and agencies; to sensitize policy makers for needed thrust and support for managing TAAPs/TAADs; to identify human resource development needs for capacity building in managing and research related to transboundary aquatic diseases. Welcome addresses were delivered by Dasho Rinzin Dorji, Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan, Dr. Karma Rinzin, Chief Veterinary Officer, Animal Health Division, DoL, Bhutan and Dr. Kesang Wangchuk, Chief, RED, DoL, Bhutan.

The consultation meeting was attended by more than 30 participants from different institutions and organizations from Bhutan, and SAARC member countries. In successive technical sessions, six country status paper and many oral presentations were made on transboundary fish diseases in South Asian countries, and policy framing necessary for surveillance and control of diseases of transboundary importance. This was followed by separate working group discussion and policy recommendation for the SAARC Region drafted. After the seminar, the participants had occasion to visit the coldwater fish farming, research facilities at Haa, Bhutan on 9th November and to further continue their discussions.

The following recommendations were drawn in the SAARC Regional consultation on 'Policy Framing on Transboundary Fish Diseases and Their Control Measures in South Asia',

Recommendations:

1. Establish a mandatory reporting system for fish diseases of concern which are detected by health officers and fish farmers
2. Establish SAARC regional database for disease recording that can be used to identify and maintain disease free zones.
3. Registration of fish farms at national level.
4. Assessments of health status in a production site on regular inspections with clearly defined procedures for inspection and health control in fish farms should be conducted
5. Standardized sampling procedures and laboratory examinations according to World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) prescription should follow
6. Establishment/identification of a competent SAARC Regional Level Laboratory Service carrying out fish disease diagnosis using assured procedures.
7. Procedures for dealing with outbreaks of serious transmissible diseases, including eradication procedures viz, vaccination strategies, sanitary slaughtering, disinfection etc. should be defined
8. Import regulations - Quarantine measures , and regulations regarding the introduction of new fish species into new areas
9. Fish health certification, transport regulations as well as certification regulation should be followed
10. Human Resource Development through education, training and exchange programs among the SAARC member countries including visits, project support and resource sharing.
11. Strengthening institutional capacity and developing collaborative and comprehensive efforts to address transboundary fish diseases, surveillance and control.

SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Small Scale Fisheries in South Asia’



PARC chairman inaugurating the consultation meeting

SAARC Agriculture centre (SAC) has organized a SAARC Regional Consultation on ‘Small Scale Fisheries in South Asia’ in Islamabad, Pakistan during 27-29 November 2018. The program was jointly organized by the SAC, Dhaka and National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Pakistan. Dr. Shiba Shankar Giri, Senior Program Specialist (Fisheries), SAC, Dhaka was the program coordinator and led the SAARC delegation to Pakistan. The National Focal-point Experts of the SAARC member countries, Mrs. Quazi Shams Afroz of Bangladesh, Mr. JambayTshewang of Bhutan, , Mr. Baikuntha Adhikari of Nepal, Dr. Muhammad Ramzan Ali of Pakistan, Mr. J. Suthaagaran of Sri Lanka and Dr S. S. Giri of SAC were in the delegation. Dr Rehana Kaushar, NRDC was the local coordinator of the consultation meeting.

The objectives of these three days regional consultation were; to understand the socio-geographic background and present status of small-scale fishery and fishers in South Asia; and to sensitize the policy makers for policy framing for securing sustainable SSF in the context of food security, poverty eradication and environmental protection.

The consultation meeting was graced by the Honourable Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Sahibzada Muhammad Mehboob Sultan, Dr Yusuf Zafar, Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Director General, NARC, Pakistan.

The consultation meeting was attended by more than 30 participants from different institutions and organizations of Pakistan, and SAARC member countries. In successive technical sessions, five country status paper and many oral presentations were made on Small Scale fisheries in South Asian countries, and necessary policy framing. This was followed by separate working group discussion and policy recommendation for the SAARC Region drafted. After the seminar, the participants had occasion to visit the Punjab Fisheries, Aquaculture facility at NARC on 29th November and to further continue their discussions.

The following recommendations were drawn in the SAARC Regional consultation on ‘Small-scale fisheries in South Asia’,



Dr. S.S. Giri hand over a crest to the guest

Recommendations:

Livelihood

1. Diversification of small scale fisheries in accordance to species, season, weather, tidal elevation, etc. and introduction of varieties of gears for maximum benefit from fisheries.
2. Cooperatives are established and supported through microfinance system to break the dependence of fishermen on middlemen.
3. Creation of alternate livelihood options for small scale fishers.

Information

4. Market information system to safeguard the interests of small-scale fishers by enabling them to obtain better prices and margins need to be developed

Policy

5. Multidisciplinary approach (public sector, private sector, fishers' communities and NGOs) for recognizing the complexity involved in managing small-scale fisheries need to be ensured.
6. Effective management systems to prevent over exploitation of fisheries resources.

7. Preferential access rights in coastal well as inland waters for small-scale fishers through group fishing rights and territorial use rights for fisheries.

8. Legal frameworks for community level management and decision-making.

9. Increase women's participation in decision-making in the community and other organizations.

10. Insurance and securities for small scale fisheries and fishers.

11. Promotion of international fish trade and export should not adversely affect the nutritional needs of local people for whom fish is critically a nutritious diet, their health and well-being and for whom other comparable sources of food are not readily available or affordable.

Capacity Development

Empowering stakeholders through capacity development (training, education, exchange and exposure visit, collaborative programs), institutional strengthening through active institutional linkages and better communication among the SAARC member states and international partners.

Project Inception Meeting of “Livelihood Enhancement of the Small Farmer in SAARC Region through Small Scale Agro-busines focusing on Value Chain Development”



Honorable finance Minister of Bhutan
Inaugurating the meeting



Participants of the meeting

First multicountry project on “Livelihood Enhancement of the Small Farmer in SAARC Region through Small Scale Agro-busines Focusing on Value Chain Development” of the SAARC Agriculture Centre launched on 26-27 November 2018 in Thimphu, Bhutan. Seven Member States (Except Afghanistan) are partners of the aforesaid project and took part in the meeting. SAC is working as co-coordinating agency of the project with the Member States. Total project cost is 2.24 million USD.

The main objectives of the project were

- To identify and replicate successful food processing technologies and models for fruits and vegetable in South and South-East Asia region;
- To increase skill and capacity of smallholder farm families on value addition of locally produces fruits and vegetable;
- To increase income and improve livelihoods of the small holders;
- To promote empowerment of rural women and employment through promotion of agri-business;

- To develop value chain of the agriculture products and mainstreaming the locally produced commodities.

Honorable Minister of Finance Lyonpo Namgay Tshering, Royal Government of Bhutan Inaugurated the 2 days workshop. His Excellency informed that SDF is an important institution in SAARC Member States and this project will enable Member States to share best practices. The project comes at the right time for Bhutan since the 12th Five Year Plan of the country is starting and will have more impact in Bhutan. The Royal Government of Bhutan accords for this project. The SDF Board Director and alternative Board Director from Bhutan also attended the inauguration session along with the Director, Department of Agriculture, Royal Government of Bhutan. CEO, SDF welcomed the distinguished guests and all the participants to the meeting and addressed with highlight on the Objective of the meeting and project. The CEO encouraged the participants to make this inception meeting a very fruitful exercise, as the success of the project is dependent on establishing a clear project goal as also of understanding the SDF policies, reporting requirements etc.

National Workshop on “Invasive Species threats in Bangladesh”

The National workshop on new invasive species threats in Bangladesh was jointly organised by SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) in collaboration with CAB International (CABI) at Lakeshore Hotel, Gulshan 2, Dhaka on 10 December 2018. The workshop focused on emerging invasive pest including Fall Armyworm with the following objectives:

1. Identify and prioritise potential new invasive species threatening agriculture and the environment in the region(s)
2. Discuss a case study invasive species, fall armyworm, and what to do about it
3. Share experience and prevention advice for species that are present in some countries but not yet others
4. Document this prevention advice for sharing more widely, as appropriate
5. Discuss current prevention protocols at national level, and identify future activities for strengthening them.

The national workshop was inaugurated at 9:00 am in the Shamadhan hall of Hotel Lakeshore Hotel, Gulshan 2, Dhaka under the Chairmanship of Kbd. Amitav Das, Director General, Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture, People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Mr. Sanat Kumar Saha, Additional Secretary (Extension), Ministry of Agriculture, People’s Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Dr. Nasreen Sultana, Senior Program Specialist (Horticulture), SAC welcome the Chairman, Chief Guest, CABI team, speakers and participants. The Chairman reminded about the possible threats of newer invasive pests particularly the Fall Armyworm. He emphasized on regional cooperation with neighbouring countries to mitigate the challenges of trans-boundary pest. He urged SAC and CABI to develop collaborative programme to address the challenge. He remarked that the primary crop for “Fall Armyworm” is maize and Sub-Saharan African countries recorded a huge crop loss owing to the invasion of the above alien invasive pest. He suggested for collaborative research, sharing of indigenous knowledge and experiences towards mitigation,

regional partnership development in addition strict implementation of quarantine measures.

Dr. Malvika Chaudhary, Plantwise Regional Coordinator, Asia, CABI, outlined the objectives of the National Workshop pertaining to the emerging invasive pest threats.

Tracing the worldwide experience of CABI, she emphasized on preparedness against “Emerging Trans-boundary Pests” by developing collaborative programmes with regional partners focussing on prevention, detection, response and control. The Chairman of the workshop also emphasised on the importance on strengthening the system to address the new threats of invasive in Bangladesh and appreciated the objective of the workshop covering number of such concern under one umbrella. Dr. Syed Nurul Alam, Director, Planning & Evaluation, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute elaborately presented on Current status on invasive pests in Bangladesh. He focused on major invasive pests in Bangladesh. He informed the house about the recent actions initiated by the Government of Bangladesh on “Fall Armyworm”. In view of urgency, the BARI has started extensive research on several issues of “Fall Armyworm” prevention, detection, control measures for the advancement of knowledge and skills about above pest. A series of presentation were made by CABI team on “Invasive species threats and risks”, “Identifying/ prioritising risks in the country”, “Horizon Scanning Tool”, “Plantwise plant clinics for early detection and preparedness”. Dr. Manju Thakur along with CABI Country Coordinator Mr. Rajendra Ganeshmoorthy demonstrated how the Horizon scanning tool developed by CABI can be utilised to identify and prioritise action against specific invasive threats to a particular country. Finally, an interactive session was conducted with the participants to formulate the future course of actions against “Emerging Invasive Transboundary Pests”. Participants were guided to come with appropriate suggestion on account of “stakeholder engagement”, “community actions”, “best solutions for practice” and “knowledge and data management”. After a full day activities on invasive species threats in Bangladesh, the national workshop outlined the following **recommendations:**

Recommendations from the Workshop

1. Regional cooperation and partnership among neighbouring countries against alien invasive transboundary pests
2. Constitution of task force at national and regional level with relevant stakeholders to have preparedness and response against transboundary pests
3. Needs to include farmers, international and regional organization in the newly formed National Coordination Body
4. Intensive and focussed research and exchange of technology is imperative on biology and management of fall armyworm with the participation of all neighbouring countries
5. Capacity building of extension personal/ researchers on innovations from global knowledge.
6. Study tours to be conducted with high officials visiting countries with experience in dealing with invasive through robust regulatory system.
7. Involvement of mass and social media for awareness development, knowledge sharing on invasive pests
8. Strict quarantine rules to be instituted and followed.
9. Development of Monitoring and Forecasting app against alien pests

