



# SAARC AGRINEWS



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

## October – December 2021

### Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia: Fostering regional cooperation for sustainable and resilient agricultural Systems

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and SAARC Development Fund (SDF) launched a project **Consortium for Scaling-up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia (C-SUCSeS)** in November 2021. The project will be implemented in all Member States of the SAARC for next three years. The consortium is kicked off with an initial pilot investment of about USD 3.1 million provided by IFAD, and SDF.

The central objective of this project is to develop evidence based strategies to collectively tackle the impact of climate change in South Asia. The project will focus on promoting sustainable and resilient agricultural intensification in South Asia through building the capacity of institutions and enhancing skills to scale-up climate smart strategies and technologies.



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On November 24, 2021, an official launching of the project was organized in Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) Complex, Dhaka. The event was inaugurated by Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque, Additional Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh and Dr. Md. Ruhul Amin Talukder, Additional Secretary (PPC), Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh. Speaking at the inaugural program Mr. Abdel karim Sma, Lead Regional Economist, IFAD expressed hope that the partnership agreement will strengthen IFAD's collaboration with SAC to work together on improving food security and to benefit small holder agriculture in the region. He emphasized that the project will look at climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices in the context of farming systems that integrate benefits for adaptation, nutrition, and livelihood security for millions of underprivileged and marginalized women and youth. Further, he assured that the size of investment will grow in the coming years.

Agriculture has historically been risky business, and it is becoming riskier due to climate change and its associated impacts in South Asia. According to one estimate, the region could lose between 10-50 percent of crop production by end of the century due to global warming. Yet, the sector is still the main source of livelihood for over 50 percent of the population in South Asia. This reality calls for integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies with overarching goal of ensuring food, nutrition, and livelihood security for millions of under privileged and marginalized people living in the region.

Highlighting the importance of regional cooperation in promoting sustainable and resilient agricultural intensification in South Asia, H.E.Mr. Esala Ruwan WeeraKoon, Secretary General of SAARC said that the SAARC Agricultural Centre (SAC) will promote and support regional cooperation among SAARC Member States in fostering sustainable and resilient agricultural adaptation. Currently, cross-border cooperation between national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES) in South Asia has largely remained constrained due to lack of capacity. This multi-country project will have far reaching impact to promote sustainable and resilient agriculture intensification in South Asia said Mr. Weerakoon.



SAARC Secretary General H.E.Mr. Esala Ruwan WeeraKoon Delivering his remarks in Virtual mode

Dr. Md. Baktar Hossain, Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre highlighted the fact that the SAARC Agriculture Center as the Centre of Excellence can leverage regional integration through its shared vision among SAARC Member States supported by appropriate policy driven strategies addressing climate risks in South Asia. Although several agricultural policies have been implemented across South Asian countries, there is a lack of special consideration on climate change adaptation and mitigation. While there are National Adaptation Plans for Action (NAPA) for agricultural development, in the absence of evidence-based strategic investment plans, they are often not put into action.

Dr. Shahidur Rashid, Director IFPRI-South Asia highlighted that research based policy -solutions can sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition. Dr. Rshid further said this agreement provides us a platform for collaborative efforts to generate evidence-based policy solutions that can accelerate climate-resilient and sustainable food supply in South Asia. We believe climate change adaptation and sustainable agricultural

intensification are inextricably linked

In fact, this consortium will foster partnership and cooperation to provide support on:

- 1) accelerating the identification and scaling-up of viable CSA interventions through national policies and programs
- (2) setting-up effective and efficient mechanisms for knowledge sharing, policy dialogue, and cooperation in R&D programs among SAARC countries on CSA.

A thorough mapping exercise will be conducted at regional level on the impact of climate change, to identify agro-ecosystems, and cross-disseminate viable technologies and practices which will help to accelerate impacts and outreach of the current national research efforts. “We hope that our collective support will augment the continuous efforts of all the Member States towards enhancing the adaptive capacity of especially our small holder farmers against the impacts of climate change,” said Officer-In-Charge of SAARC Development Fund and Director, Social Window, Mr. Anuj Goel.

The project will target to benefit small holders focusing on women farmers, as well as researchers, extension workers, and policy makers in SAARC member countries, with a particular focus on Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka for piloting and scaling up of CSA technologies. All SAARC countries including Maldives will also benefit from capacity building and knowledge sharing activities.



Invited guests and other participants of the project Launching program.

## SAARC Agriculture Centre Opens up a Book Corner at the Central Library of PSTU

SAARC Agriculture Centre opened up a Book Corner at the Central Library of the Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) on 26 December 2021. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Swadesh C. Samantha and Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director SAARC Agriculture Centre jointly inaugurated the book corner. This was followed by an interactive seminar where Dr. Nasreen Sultana, Senior Program Specialist (Horticulture) presented on the SAC activities and Dr. Pankaj Sarkar, Librarian presented on the library activities of the University. Dr. Mohammed Ali, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, PSTU spoke on the University's overall activities that followed a discussion with Dean of the faculties and got apprised on the needs of the faculty in developing a partnership with the SAARC Agriculture Centre. Dr. Grinson George Senior Program Specialist (Fisheries), Dr. Younus Ali (STO) and Fatema Nasreen Jahan Senior Program Officer (NRM) also spoke during the deliberations. SAARC Agriculture Centre is exploring the possibility of enriching the faculty and academicians in the South Asian Countries and wish to engage them in scientific research endeavors



## The SAC Celebrated the 37<sup>th</sup> SAARC Charter Day

The SAARC Agriculture Centre celebrated the 37<sup>th</sup> SAARC Charter Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2021, focusing on **Strategies to Address Hidden Hunger in the Region**, commemorating the UN-declared International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021.

Honourable Agriculture Minister Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque MP, graced the celebration as Chief Guest. Honourable State Minister for ICT Division Mr. Zunaid Ahmed Palak and Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock Dr. Mohammad Yamin Choudhury, attended the program as special guests. Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque Additional Foreign Secretary (SAARC & BIMSTEC) graced as guest of honour. Dr. Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, EC, BARC presided over the program. Dr. Ajantha De Silva, Director General, Department of Agriculture, Sri Lanka delivered the keynote speech as the occasion

In his address, Honourable Chief Guest emphasized on improving the yield gap in agricultural production by adopting technologies which are resilient. He added that the efforts of the Ministry and policy planners have made remarkable improvement in the food production despite the recent challenges as the farmer-friendly policy driven strategies has made Bangladesh to achieve self-sufficiency in food. Supplementing the ideas, the Honourable ICT Minister put forth the concept of digitally enabled services for improving farm production.

Presenting the current food and nutritional security status in the region, Dr. Silva pointed out that the eating habits of the people of South Asia are one of the main causes of hidden hunger. He also mentioned that diversifying of food production and consumption and popularizing under utilized fruits and vegetables, could help overcome this challenge in the region.

The upgraded version of the website of the SAC with e-repositories, databases and all major events were launched during the occasion by Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Honorable Minister for Agriculture, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh. Similarly, four SAC publications of the year were also unveiled by the Chief Guest in the presence of Mr. Zunaid Ahmed Palak MP, Honorable State Minister for ICT Division. The program was ended with the vote of thanks from Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director SAC, who expressed gratitude to all the distinguished guests and dignitaries for their gracious presence in the ceremony.

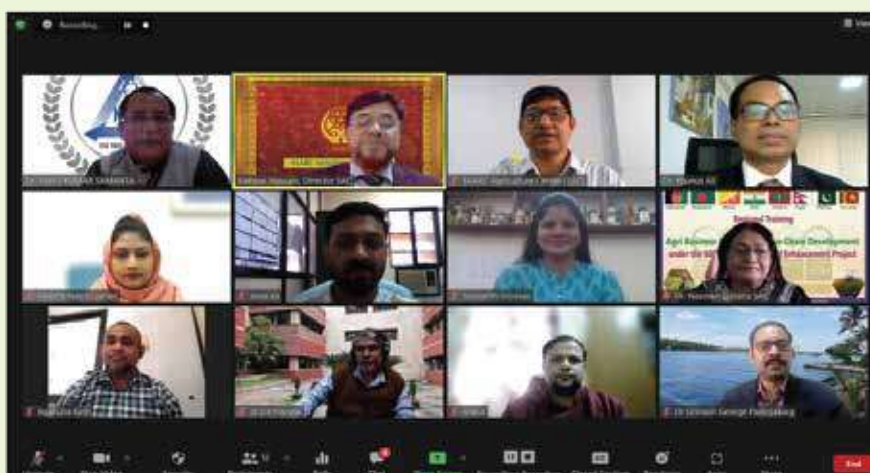


Honorable Agriculture Minister Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP is delivering his speech at the 37<sup>th</sup> SAARC Charter Day

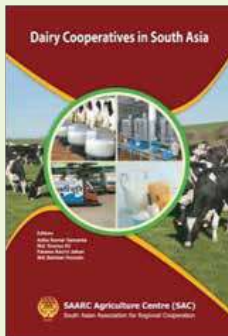
## Progress review meeting of the SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholars

The SAARC Agriculture Centre organized a progress sharing meeting of SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholars under the SAARC Agriculture PhD Scholarship Program on 29 December 2021 in virtual mode. Three PhD fellows, Mr. Ankur Poudel from Nepal, Dr. Sowjanya Lakshmi and Mr. Anas K. K. from India shared their progress on their research activities. Dr. Lakshmi is pursuing her studies in Veterinary Science at ICAR-IVRI, India and Mr. Anas is pursuing his studies in ICAR-CIFT, Cochin, India. Mr. Poudel is pursuing his studies in Plant Biotechnology in ICAR-IARI, India.

Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain, Director, SAC chaired the session. Dr. Md. Younus, STO, SAC made introductory remarks about the program. The technical session was chaired by Dr. Ashis Kumar Samanta, Principal Scientist, ICAR, Bengaluru, and Former Senior Program Specialist (Livestock). Among others, Dr. Pranab Kumar Mandal, supervisor of the SAARC PhD fellow and Principal Scientist, ICAR and technical staffs of SAC were also present in the meeting.



## Publications



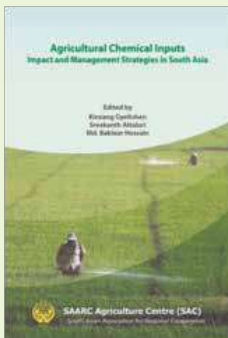
### Dairy Cooperatives in South Asia

*Ashis Kumar Samanta*

Published in October 2021

Available at SAC Library (hard copy) and  
at <https://www.sac.org.bd/publications/> (soft copy)

This book has an in-depth analysis of current status of dairy co-operatives and suggests a road map for strengthening dairy co-operatives for growth and prosperity of dairy farmers in the region. Livestock plays a vital role as the growth engine of rural economy in SAARC region and contributes immensely to food security and economic upliftment. Among different categories of livestock, dairy animal occupies significant niche because it produces milk, an important source of essential amino acid, vitamins, and proteins. Albeit several factors contributing positively to wards growth and development of the dairy sector, nevertheless, the cooperative is presumed to be one of the most important factors.



### Agricultural Chemical Inputs: Impact and Management Strategies in South Asia

*Kinzang Gyeltshen*

Published in December 2021

Available at SAC Library (hard copy) and  
at <https://www.sac.org.bd/publications/> (soft copy)

This book is published to share information on the impacts of agricultural chemical inputs on the environment and human health, policies and legislations put in place to regulate the use of agro chemicals, and effective management strategies implemented in the region to reduce its adverse impacts. It also contain the recommendations of the regional consultation meeting, which covers policy, strategy, management, and capacity development aspects of agricultural chemicals use and its strategies to minimize adverse impacts in South Asia.



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