

A **GUIDEBOOK** FOR  
CAPACITATING FARMERS'  
ORGANIZATIONS  
TOWARDS EFFECTIVE  
ENGAGEMENT OF  
PUBLIC AGRICULTURE  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS





FORE  
WORD

**D**evelopment effectiveness for us is clear and simple. People for whom the development assistance is meant for must be meaningfully engaged in the development process, to ensure that it is inclusive and provide benefits in the most sustainable and cost-effective way.

The AgriCord global alliance and AsiaDHRRA recognizes the importance of Farmers' Organizations (FO) meaningful participation in public programs to ensure equitable and sustainable socio-economic growth. They recognize the vital role of agri-agencies, donor communities, and, civil society groups in looking out, ensuring, even creating/claiming spaces for participation of FOs in public programs and projects. However, these roles have to be coupled with resources and capacities to engage, as well as, with policies and actions reflecting the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. It also comes with the willingness to change paradigm and take risk in developing new partnership relations, among different organizations but of shared agenda.

In 2014, the AgriCord alliance implemented an FO Facility Project which financed actions aimed at ensuring genuine participation

of smallholder farmers through their representative organization in public investment projects and programs for agriculture and rural development, and, food and livelihood security in developing countries. The creation of this funding facility stemmed from the learning experiences of Farmers Fighting Poverty program implementation in Africa and Asia where many FOs have successfully established themselves as recognized interlocutors and partners of government. But it is also because of the continuing failed attempts to engage productively and constructively governments to participate in and/or shape public programs, that investing in a focused FO Facility was seen as both urgent and relevant.

This publication outlines the crucial steps done by FOs in engaging public programs and projects; it also documents the various roles and modes of engagements they have taken; and, discusses the challenging and enabling factors for effective FOs engagement in public programs and projects. This guidebook is intended for use not only of FOs, but also of donor agencies, agri-agencies, civil society groups, government, and, other relevant public program implementers.

Knowledge management is an important process for AsiaDHRRA. Through this documentation and popularization of experiences we are able to provide our partners with concrete tools that they can use in their continuing efforts towards sustainable rural development. We will continue to invest in creating spaces for partners to dialogue, share, and, learn from one another.

Likewise, AgriCord shall continue to invest in supporting initiatives towards the institutionalization of FOs' recognition and participation in public programs for agriculture and rural development. Eradicating poverty and hunger cannot be done by our sector alone. As such, we must all support multi-stakeholder partnerships, to ensure that the smallholders and family farmers are not left behind in achieving sustainable development.

We thank AgriCord, CSA, AFA, and, all FOs mentioned in this publication for their generous sharing of knowledge and experiences. We hope this documentation can help you in strengthening your capacities and advancing your agenda. Lastly, we thank Ernie Lim, lead writer, and Mags Catindig for putting this publication together, and, Jet Hermida for the layout.

**Marlene Ramirez**

*Secretary General, AsiaDHRRA*

*Board Member, AgriCord*



# INTRO DUCTION



**W**ith the growing recognition of the “Development Effectiveness Principles” (including the principle of “inclusive development”) within the development sector, more and more bilateral and multilateral development agencies, as well as an increasing number of governments, are recognizing the need to involve farmers’ organizations (FOs) in the conceptualization and implementation of public agriculture development programs. This has been mainly due to the invaluable contributions that on-ground knowledge and experience of FOs can make in sharpening the targeting, design strategies and support mechanisms of these programs. Farmers’ organizations can also be key players in the identification and implementation of key policies and actions towards the improvement of the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of donors’ and governments’ interventions. (2014, AgriCord)

However, between the political willingness of all partners to get farmers on board of development programs and the effective participation of FOs, there is a huge gap that has to be overcome. On one hand, there are the government officials and development

agency experts/consultants whose awareness of and attitude towards FOs need to be re-oriented to facilitate recognition of the need for and advantages of FO participation in the program development and implementation process. On the other hand, FOs lack the resources, skills and “credentials” to effectively engage and be “recognized” by bilateral and multilateral development agencies, national agencies, and, local government units.

It was the realization of this gap between the FOs and the program implementors and government officials that prompted bilateral and multilateral groups, such as the World Bank, through the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) and other international development organizations, such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), to launch interventions that will bridge this gap and sought to identify and ensure the participation of FOs in the design, management, implementation and monitoring of the projects being funded by the GAFSP and other programs requiring FO/stakeholder engagement and participation.

The objectives of these projects were mainly “to ensure that smallholder farmers in developing countries benefit from public investment projects and programs for agriculture and rural development financed under the GAFSP initiative” and “to support membership-based producer organizations representing small farmers to actively participate and provide an effective contribution to the national design phase of the investment projects financed under the public sector financing window of the GAFSP initiative.” (2013, AFA et al.)

As part of this intervention to assist FOs in building their capacities to enable them to meet these different requirements for engagement in public agricultural programs, AgriCord in close cooperation with IFAD, developed this guidebook. However, this guidebook can also serve as a template for other donor agencies who intend to support FO/CSO engagements with public investment programs.

The contents of this guidebook are based on the learnings and concrete experiences of FOs and other civil society organizations (CSOs), both in Africa (i.e. Benin, Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, RdC, Senegal, and Togo) and Asia (i.e. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines and Viet Nam), in engaging national government agencies and other program implementors of GAFSP-funded programs and projects. The experiences were documented during three workshops spearheaded by Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA), Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), and, AsiaDHRRA, through the support of IFAD, held in Brussels ( 28th-29th November 2012), Phnom Penh (8th-11th November 2012), and, Hanoi (31st-4th July 2016).

This guidebook discusses the different modes of engagement that the FOs/CSOs undertook in dealing with multilateral mechanisms/ programs (i.e. GAFSP), donor agencies (i.e. IFAD), and national governments/programs. It shall also identify the different possible stakeholders and the roles they play in public program engagement.

This guidebook also discusses the different challenges and facilitating factors that FOs and CSOs have encountered during their engagement (from mere influencing to direct participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of public programs) with national governments and program implementors. It shall also provide insights/“tips” and mechanisms/“tools” that can be employed to address such challenges or create/enhance facilitating factors.





# MODES OF PUBLIC PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

Engagement of public programs can be done in three (3) modes or levels. These will be (1) engagements with multilateral mechanisms or programs (i.e. GAFSP), (2) direct engagements or partnerships with donor organizations at the country level (i.e. IFAD’s Project for Agricultural Development and Economic Empowerment or PADEE”) and (3) engagements with national or government programs (i.e. local agriculture production programs, etc.).

Requirements for engagement in terms organizational capacity and reach, and technical capabilities will vary with each mode. Roles of FOs (i.e. beneficiary, service provider, program implementor/ manager, program designer) and engagement points (i.e. Steering Committees, program consultations, national agencies, local governments, etc.) may also vary.

## **1. ENGAGING MULTILATERAL MECHANISMS/PROGRAMS**

As with the GAFSP (see Diagram No. 1), the primary arena for engagement is the Steering Committee of the GAFSP. As with the experience of AFA, it was able to gain membership to the GAFSP

Steering Committee and was able to engage the said body and put forward (together with the other CSO representatives in the GAFSP Steering Committee) written proposals in formulating the framework for “participation” which further paved the way for greater participation of FOs at the country level programs. AFA (with the other CSO representatives) was also able to push for the “Missing Middle Initiative” (MMI) which sought to reach more effectively the “missing middle” or farmer producers who have limited or no access to financing for their agricultural work or those in the boundary between subsistence and commercial farming. These farmer producers being not big enough to qualify under the Private Sector Window of the GAFSP. The MMI provides grants and direct financing to regional/national FOs and agri-CSOs from supervising entities such as FAO, IFAD, ADB, etc.. (2016, AFA et al.)

Another “entry” or engagement point for FOs will be the country-led or regional programs being funded by the GAFSP through its Public Sector Window. The Public Sector Window can only be accessed by government. However, governments that access funds under this window are required to conduct meaningful country-wide consultations with all stakeholders as input for the design of the country program.

Thus, at this level, FOs can engage their governments or the national agency implementing the program: 1) to seek participation in the said consultations to try to influence the design of the country program; 2) to seek membership in the Steering Committee that will oversee the implementation of the program (allowing the FO influence over the actual implementation of the program); 3) to be implementors of the program as Service Providers; and 4) to be recipients or beneficiaries of goods and services to be provided by the program. With the end goal of such engagements is to ensure that FOs and other stakeholders gain access and truly benefit from such programs.

The GAFSP’s other window, the Private Sector Window will not be accessible to most FOs as it is dedicated for long- and short-term

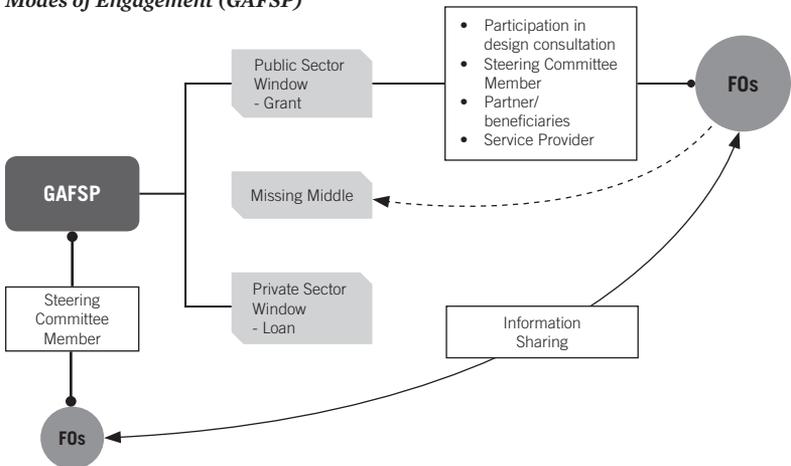
loans, credit guarantees, and equity to (usually big) private sector activities for agricultural development and food security.

Initiatives to participate in the design and to influence policies of multilateral programs such as the GAFSP will require very high level of organizational and technical capacities. Such FO/CSO will have to have a significant constituency/membership base with broad geographical scope. Meaning it will have to an apex organization with member organizations in several countries. It will also have to have capabilities in advocacy, negotiations, policy research and development.

For FOs engaging the GAFSP at the country level, requirements may be less stringent depending on the role they will play (see Box No. 1). FOs that will want to influence the design of the country-level program will still require capacities in advocacy, negotiations, and policy research and development. But just having nationwide organizational presence may suffice.

For FOs that only seek to be beneficiaries of the program, organizational presence in multiple provinces may not be so much required.

**Diagram No. 1**  
*Modes of Engagement (GAFSP)*



## 2. FO-DONOR DIRECT PARTNERSHIPS

Another mode of engagement with public programs is the FO-donor direct partnerships wherein the FO sits with the donor agency (IFAD in this case) and also with government ministries/agencies to design and develop the program/project. However, such arrangements require high level of trust and confidence of the donor and government agencies on the status and capabilities of the FO.

Such is the case with Viet Nam Farmer's Union (VNFU) which is the primary FO in the country and Cambodia's Farmer and Nature Network (FNN) which developed a strong working relationship with the IFAD country office in Cambodia. (2016, AFA et al.)

Under such mode, aside from participation in the design and management (via membership in Project Committees) of the program/project, the FO may also play the role of program beneficiary and service provider. (See Diagram No. 2)

**Diagram No. 2**  
*Modes of Engagement (IFAD)*



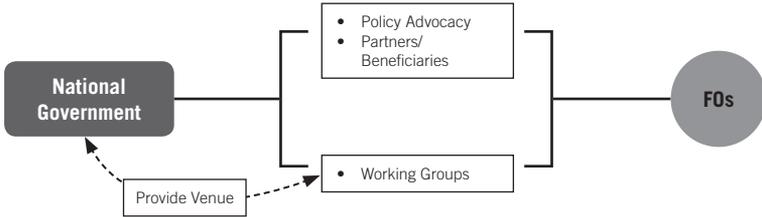
## 3. ENGAGING NATIONAL PROGRAMS

The third mode involves FOs/CSOs engaging national programs of their respective governments. (See Diagram No. 3)

Depending on the history and political context of the country, and the standing relationship between government and CSOs, the opportunity for FOs to participate in the implementation, more so the design of government development programs, may be quite slim as CSOs are usually viewed by government officials as “oppositionists.” (2016, AFA et al.) Depending on the democratic space in the country, FOs/

CSOs may still engage the national government/national programs on the level of policy advocacy to demand for participation in the implementation of national programs as beneficiaries.

**Diagram No. 3**  
*Modes of Engagement (Other Country Programs)*





The title is centered and surrounded by several stylized leaf icons of varying sizes and orientations. The text reads: THE “FOUR-STEP” PROCESS OF PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT: KEY FACTORS & LEARNING.

# THE “FOUR-STEP” PROCESS OF PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT: KEY FACTORS & LEARNING

This section discusses the “four-step” process usually involved in public development program engagement. It also presents major learnings, insights, and “tools” developed by FO/CSO partners of AFA, AsiaDHRA, IFAD and AgriCord that have engaged public programs.

These “four-steps” are as follows: (2014, AgriCord)

**Step 1: FOs Mobilization** – Information dissemination drive and mobilization of FOs and related CSOs on new or ongoing public development projects/programs on agriculture and rural development;

**Step 2: Institutionalization of FOs Participation** – Ensuring FO involvement in the institutional setting of the country design process for the new public program/s;

**Step 3: FOs Preparation for Engagement** – Preparation by the selected national FOs of a proposal for their involvement in the design process, and in the implementation phase of the public program; and

#### **Step 4: Actual Engagement in Public Development Programs –**

Release of small grants for logistical and technical support to FOs, and the actual conduct of engagement activities in the designing and implementation of state programs and projects on agriculture.

However, it must be noted that the four steps enumerated does not have to be strictly followed chronologically. Depending on various factors, such as maturity and capacity of FOs and their national platform organizations, presence of enabling policies on FO participation in public programs or level of openness of governments in working with FOs, certain steps can be skipped.

For example, in countries where there are strong FOs and national platform organizations and where the government and FOs/CSOs already have an extensive history of working together, then FOs/CSOs can already proceed to “Step 4.” But in areas where FOs are still very young and weak, then these FOs might have to go through Steps 1 to 3 first with focus on capacity building under “Step 3.”

#### **STEP 1: FOs MOBILIZATION**

The initial stage in FO engagement in public programs mainly involves the conduct by agri-agencies (or NGO support groups), or by the government itself, of an information drive at the national and/or local level on new or on-going public investment projects and programs.

The conduct of said information drives can also be a means for gathering vital information regarding the orientation (in terms of political leaning/affiliation, development paradigm, attitude towards state engagement, etc.), technical capacity, organizational set-up, reputation, history and reach of national and local FOs and CSOs in the target country/areas.

Said information can serve as inputs to a comprehensive and systematic FO mapping and stakeholders analysis which can guide

the agri-agencies in the identification and selection of potential FO partners that can be supported in engaging public projects and programs. Said “information drives” can also be used to gauge the attitude of state players and decisions-makers towards engagement with FOs and CSOs, and the level of “democratic space” in the subject country/area.

During this stage, the agri-agency conducting the information drive can also use the activity to determine the country’s policy environment for FO-CSO participation, CSO-state engagement, transparency and governance. Identification and assessment of existing FO-CSO mechanisms/platforms that can serve as a coordinating and information-sharing mechanism during the engagement period with the state project/program can also be identified at this stage.

It is also during this stage that all stakeholders can be brought together to conduct its initial country planning for FO participation in the design and implementation of the program/project under consideration.

At the end of this stage, potential national FOs/FO platform organization and local FOs with relevant experience and meet basic “enrollment requirements” for participation are assessed and identified. A shared understanding and commitment to the intention and objectives of engaging the public program/project is also established between the donor organization and FOs/CSOs selected. Capacity building needs of selected partner FOs/CSOs shall have also already been identified at this stage.

Also, details for an in-country coordination mechanism that allows inclusion of all interested FOs and CSOs shall have already been identified (that is, if none has been identified during the mapping stage.

### ***Lessons learned & tools***

1. FOs that intend to be involved in the implementation of public investment projects and programs funded by international donor

agencies shall be able to meet basic institutional, administrative conditions and criteria such as the following:

- a. Clear governance structure and decision-making process; (2014, AgriCord)
  - b. Effective accountability policies and mechanisms; (2014, AgriCord)
  - c. Generally acceptable financial and accounting systems; (2014, AgriCord; Challenges..., AgriCord) [Sierra Leone]
  - d. Good financial track record; (2014, AgriCord)
  - e. Strongly governed with adequate and competent technical staffs; (2014, AgriCord) and
  - f. Project and proposal development skills. (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Nepal]
2. For national FOs that intend to be involved in public program design, management and monitoring (not just as beneficiaries or implementors), having the following additional qualities and capabilities will be ideal:
- a. Recognized by majority of the FOs from whom the national FO's mandate to negotiate in their behalf comes from; (2014, AgriCord)
  - b. Has track record in public program/project implementation or has already been involved in partnerships or projects with CSOs and development agencies; (2014, AgriCord)
  - c. Has clear and sound understanding of the program(s) or project(s) to be engaged; (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Sierra Leone]
  - d. Advocacy skills (i.e. capability to conduct policy analysis & advocacy, produce policy papers, leaders with good negotiation skills and able to assert and demand); (Challenges..., AgriCord)
  - e. Coalition building skills (i.e. capability to work in harmony with other FOs); (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Sierra Leone]
  - f. Networking and liaising skills for knowledge sharing and building "connections" with governments; (Challenges..., AgriCord)
  - g. Has clear objectives and framework for engagement; (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Nepal] and

- h. Strong and pro-active leaders that seek opportunities beyond the needs of their own organization and but for the bigger CSO community or social movement. (2014, AgriCord)
3. To be able to effectively identify and select potential FO partners, the agri-agencies or the government, shall conduct a systematic FO mapping and stakeholders analysis to determine the following: (Challenges..., AgriCord; 2014, AgriCord) [Sierra Leone]
    - a. Geographic reach/locations;
    - b. Administrative and institutional capacities;
    - c. Level of technical competence;
    - d. Dynamics and relationships among FOs, CSOs and government agencies both at the national and local levels - where attitude tends to be more negative at the latter level (i.e. FOs viewed as opposition or threat rather than as cooperators or contributors to development, level of trust or distrust, etc.). (2014, AgriCord)
  4. Sample of information needed for FO mapping: (Supporting..., IFAD & AgriCord) [Bangladesh]
    - a. General Identifying information of interviewee and the producer organization
    - b. Organizational mandate, norms, values and objectives
    - c. Organizational membership pattern
    - d. Source of finance
    - e. Networking and outreach
    - f. Strength and weakness &
    - g. Future plans
    - h. Organizational management, decision making process, transparency and accountability mechanisms
  5. In choosing FO partners, government and development agencies may opt for FOs with existing projects or engagements with the government, and has “a clear vision of development of their territory.” (2014, AgriCord)

6. However, there may be situations where there will be a limited number of potential FO partners as many will most likely be unable to meet the “enrollment requirements” of program donors and implementing governments, or may simply be unwilling to engage governments due to ideological and trust reasons. For example in Nepal, most FOs are farmers’ wings of political parties or groups and may not be “representative” of the majority of FOs in the country. Historical context of a country may have a highly militant and critical civil society community that has been at odds with the government, thus, resulting in very low trust level between the two sectors. In other countries, the civil society community may still be so young or undeveloped that there will be very few FOs, more so national FOs. In such cases, existing weak FOs may still have to undergo capacity building and/or “confidence building” activities with government even before considering their participation in public programs/projects design and implementation.

For such situations, the following “tools” or interventions can be undertaken:

- a. Conduct of institutional/organizational diagnostics to determine the necessary interventions to strengthen the selected FO(s); (Challenges..., AgriCord; 2014, AgriCord) [Togo, Senegal, Liberia]
  - b. Conduct of organizational development (OD) interventions as identified under the organizational diagnostics; (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Togo]
  - c. Provision of support to the FO(s) in the form of technical assistance; (Challenges..., AgriCord) and
  - d. Tap experts to assist FOs in the preparation of project proposals for organizational development and strengthening. (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Togo]
7. To ensure strong and healthy relationships, close coordination and cooperation between the national FO federations and the local FOs, effective communication and transparency mechanisms (specially in relation to fund accessing) shall be established; (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Sierra Leone]

## **STEP 2: INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FOs PARTICIPATION**

The second stage in engaging public investment programs involves initiatives to ensure FO involvement in the institutional setting of the country design and implementation processes. This stage will involve bringing together in-country authorities representing the government, the donors and the FOs to collectively identify possible areas and mechanisms of involvement for the FOs in the design/implementation of the intervention.

At the end of this stage, a confirmation of an agreement shall have been reached between all relevant stakeholders/counterparts in the recipient country on the effective inclusion of farmers' organizations and of other civil society stakeholders in the detailed design process and/or in the implementation of the specific public investment programs.

Other enabling policies and laws shall have also been identified or enacted, and included in the discussions among the stakeholders.

### ***Lessons learned & tools***

1. The primary factor that will affect the effectiveness of FO participation in public investment programs will be the level of democratic space in the country under consideration. A highly authoritarian government will simply be less amenable to allowing FOs and CSOs to participate in the implementation, more so in the design and management, of public programs and projects compared to a more democratic state. Thus, donors will have to first assess the level of "openness" of countries before considering financing programs and projects that will require FO participation.
2. In countries where there might be more democratic space, another key factor that must be gauged is the "attitude" government officials/stakeholders towards FOs and CSOs. Due to historical context and past experiences, animosity and lack of trust between government officials/stakeholders and the FOs/CSOs.

Government stakeholders may view FOs and CSOs as “opposition” and threats.

Also, level of trust, acceptance and recognition may also vary at the national, regional and local levels. Officials at the national level may tend to be more accommodating to FOs and CSOs while local officials may be less open to working with the said organizations.

Furthermore, government officials and agencies that may be open to working with FOs and CSOs may only allow their participation as beneficiaries or service providers (operators of program implementation) but not as partners, more so allow FOs and CSOs participation in the design, management and monitoring of the program/project. (2014, AgriCord)

In such situations, the following factors tend to facilitate the willingness of government stakeholders with FOS and CSOs:

- a. FOs and CSOs already having “working relationships” with relevant government agencies tend to be more open in allowing participation in public program implementation; - ex. Experience in Cambodia (Challenges..., AgriCord)
- b. The existence an enabling policy environment (i.e. laws, government agency policies, or donor agency policies) increases the legitimacy of the FOs to claim a space in the coordination and implementation of programs and, if feasible, shall be pursued. (Challenges..., AgriCord; 2014, AGriCord) [Togo] However, observance or implementation of such laws and policies can still be subject to the attitude and willingness of government players (as they may ignore or not pro-actively pursue participation of FOs and CSOs) and the assertiveness of FOs and CSOs themselves.
- c. Conduct of studies that will establish “evidence” on the advantages of allowing FO/stakeholder participation in the development, management and implementation of government programs.

- d. “Confidence-building” activities such as forums where FOs/CSOs can showcase their capacities and “expertise.”
3. Donors play an important role in strengthening FOs to improve their effectiveness in engaging public programs. In most of the cases where FOs have successfully participated in public programs, it have been likely due to the will of the financier/donor itself. When FOs can inform “Program Coordination Teams” that the program’s funder has also funded the former to better intervene in the said program (and this is reinforced by the donor’s Country Program Manager) it will more likely for officials involved in the program/project to facilitate the participation of FOs. (2014, AgriCord)

The following are other roles that donor agencies can play in facilitating FO participation:

- a. Donors can also play a significant role in raising awareness at the states’ level on the key contributions that national FOs can make to the program as actors of change to their own conditions and as active participants in the implementation of project activities. (2014, AgriCord)
  - b. If possible, donor agencies financing the public programs/projects can place specific stipulations in the loan or grant agreements requiring FO/CSO participation in the design, management and implementation of the program/project.
  - c. Such stipulations in the loan or grant agreements can also require the presence of FOs as criteria for site selections for the program/project.
  - d. Visits and meetings by donor missions with implementing government agencies to reiterate or “suggest” FO/CSO participation. (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Nepal]
  - e. Support activities that will facilitate the strengthening of diplomatic and positive relationships of FOs with other international, bilateral and multilateral organizations. (2014, AgriCord)
4. Access to information to facilitate participation remains a major obstacle. This reality warrants astuteness and competence on the

part of FOs on how to deal with and manage the political realities that affect development work. (2014, AgriCord)

Such issue can be addressed through:

- a. Tripartite (CSO-FO-Gov't) dialogue mechanisms which can be effective means for monitoring project activities and reinforcing FO participation.
  - b. Coordinated and broad-based engagement mechanisms (among FOs and other stakeholders) can be effective means of gaining attention and recognition of the state/policy makers. (2014, AgriCord)
  - c. FOs may ask the assistance of other CSOs/ with “good connections” or relationships with government to facilitate access to the latter (Challenges..., AgriCord)
5. Sometimes, resistance to FO/CSO participation also comes from project personnel and Project Coordination Teams who may not be familiar or have no experience dealing with FOs and CSOs and may view engagement with them as additional “work.” Below are possible actions that can be taken to address this issue:
- a. Program and project guidelines in the hiring of personnel at the Project Coordination Teams shall require positive disposition towards FOs and CSOs and experience in working with said groups. (2014, AgriCord)
  - b. Members of Program Coordination Teams (of program donors) shall be selected before or during the project formulation and the FO identification/selection phases to allow familiarity with the involved FOs and the participatory mandate/approach of the program/project. (2014, AgriCord)
6. One “tool” that can be used to give semblance to the institutionalization FO participation (short of enabling laws and policies) is the execution of a “memorandum of understanding” (MOU) among the stakeholders. Said MOU may stipulate the establishment of mechanisms, identification of stakeholders’

roles, responsibilities and commitments. This may include the establishment of a “program/project coordination team,” setting of regular meetings, etc.

7. In situations where the program has already been designed and is already being implemented, FOs can still try to influence the design and implementation of the program by aggressively pushing for the conduct of consultations or fora on the concerned program/project. FOs can also aggressively ask for meetings with or demand to be invited to meetings of the Program Management Team. They can also attend evaluation workshops/meetings of the program/project in consideration where they can present their recommendations and still push for their participation in the next program/project. However, the FO representative shall have ready and concrete inputs such as recommendations on how to improve the design and implementation of the program/project, which will entail detailed monitoring and assessment of the program or project’s implementation by the FO and its network/common platform.
8. The following are notable recommendations to potential donors/funders of projects on FO participation in the design, management and implementation of public investment programs:
  - a. Donors shall take into consideration that participation processes incur cost and require more time and effort. Thus, consideration for additional budget support shall be allotted for participation related activities such as dialogues and consultations, technical staff support, etc. (2014, AgriCord)
  - b. Donor shall also provide support for capacity building activities for program implementing agencies that will allow government officials and program managers “to know more how to work with FO/CSOs and other sectors.” (2014, AgriCord)
  - c. Donors that have institutionalized participation clauses in their investment packages shall also have clear policies and mandates to recipient countries for the implementation of such participation clauses. Institutionalized incentives for country

investment managers (or representatives) to facilitate FO participation. (2014, AgriCord)

### **STEP 3: FOs PREPARATION FOR ENGAGEMENT**

Stage three shall involve the preparation by the national FO or FO platform organization of a proposal for their involvement in the design process, and in the implementation phase. With possible support from agri-agencies, the national FO/FO platform organization will identify the actions necessary in order to contribute to the design/implementation phase of the program in question.

A brief proposal, ready to be transmitted to the donor organization/agency for funding, shall be prepared with the selected FOs/FO platform organization and discussed and refined with both the recipient country authorities and with the implementing entity of the project or program. The proposals will include expected outputs and results of their participation that will be used as target indicators.

The proposals may also contain capacity building interventions to further improve the FO(s) effectiveness in engagement. Provisions for technical support by relevant CSOs may also be included.

#### ***Lessons learned & tools***

1. For FOs/FO platform organizations with insufficient or very little track record in implementing projects can opt to initially collaborate w/ bigger CSOs (with better track records and reputations) for bids to implement public investment projects or for submission to donor organizations for proposals on capacity building towards participation in the design and implementation of public investment programs and projects. This will allow the FOs/FO platform organization to slowly build their track record, experience and skills in implementing projects. (2013, AFA et al.) [Cambodia]

2. The following key interventions or components are recommended to be included in the proposal to be developed:
  - a. FO Capacity Building Plan - The FOs/FO platform organization may prepare its capacity building plan using the results of the FO mapping, stakeholders analysis and organizational diagnostics that were conducted during Step 1;
  - b. Support for developing and strengthening the Internal Consultation Mechanisms between the national FO/FO platform organization and the local FOs - This will subsequently increase the national FO's/FO platform organization's "representativeness" for their constituents;
  - c. Support for sector Constraints Analysis (e.g. land tenure, value chain analysis, etc.) - This will allow the FOs to better formulate their positions and advocacy strategies;
  - d. Trainings on research and advocacy, networking and liaison work, organizational management, leadership development and networking; (Supporting..., IFAD & AgriCord) [Bangladesh]
  - e. Capacity building for effective dialogue engagements with government, program/policy development and analysis & program implementation; (2013, AFA et al.)
  - f. Funding support for strengthening and sustaining the FO platform organization or other existing national platform organizations of which the participating FOs are members or can provide technical and organizational support to FOs engaging public programs; and
  - g. Funding support for "space claiming" activities such as: 1) attendance of FO representatives to government-organized program-related meetings, consultations, dialogues and assessments; and 2) the conduct by the FOs or their national platform organizations of forums, dialogues, consultations and assessments on government programs/projects.

### 3. Below is a sample Training Module:

#### The ToT Training Course Module

Content	Methods
Introduction and inauguration	Discussion in pair, write down on card and presentation
Pre-course assessment of the participants	Question and answer
Current status of farmers in agriculture sector	Question and answer, plenary discussion, experience sharing
Effective organization	Question and answer, plenary discussion, small group work and situational analysis
Leadership	Question and answer, plenary discussion
Organizational transparency and accountability	Small group discussion, presentation and plenary discussion
Wider network of network	Question and answer, plenary discussions, small group work on situation analysis
Continued wider network of farmers' organizations	
Strategy to secure farmers' rights	Plenary discussions, small group work on case analysis
Activity Planning	Small group work by organization
Post training assessment of participants	Question and answer
Closing	Lecture

Source: Supporting Inclusive Planning of Country Projects Financed by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP): Terminal Report. IFAD-Agricord.

#### STEP 4: ACTUAL ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Step 4 shall involve the awarding and actual implementation of a small grant to FOs or their platform organization for their involvement in the design and implementation of public projects and programs on agriculture. Each intervention must be clearly linked to one or several public investments program(s), enabling the FOs to proactively and effectively influence the targeted public investments and/or leverage funding directly from them for their further role in the implementation of these investments. The possible grant activities include organizational and institutional development, capacity building/learning exchanges, research/studies, platform/network building, policy dialogues/negotiation, project formulation/proposal writing.

A small allocation may fund innovative/trail-blazing projects not covered by proposed elements.

The ultimate objective of such “small grants” is to enable FOs to access bigger funds or resources for their communities.

At this stage, the following are expected to have been achieved:

- a. Timely and relevant FO contributions to the design/implementation phase of public investment programs on agriculture;
- b. A broader constituency among FOs, their members and other key stakeholders;
- c. FO-led dialogues and negotiations, together with CSO partners and experts.
- d. Pro-active dialogues with both donors and governments, separately and joint, to express interest to participate in specific/upcoming major projects, and to solicit their commitment to a more systematic approach of integrating FOs participation in development projects

### ***Lessons learned & tools***

1. In the initiative to capacitate FOs to effectively engage the state in the design and implementation of public investment programs, one of the most important tasks will be the establishment and sustaining of national and regional FO-CSO platforms for effective communication/dialogue, consultation, networking, coordination and information-sharing among FO participants, between coordinating national FOs and its local FO members, and among FO and CSO stakeholders. These platforms can also enhance the FOs’ and CSOs’ mutual understanding among themselves, the effectiveness of advocacy and resource generation initiatives, and facilitate constructive dialogue with governments and donors. (Challenges..., AgriCord; Supporting..., IFAD & AgriCord) [Togo, Bangladesh]

Below are additional considerations with regard to the management of such platforms:

- a. With said platforms, regular meetings can be conducted among FOs and CSOs engaging government (not necessarily on the same programs or projects) to share information on learnings, expertise and other potential opportunities for engagement with state. (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Togo]
  - b. There shall be one person, who has good understanding of the dynamics among the different groups, that will be responsible for facilitating the partnership process among the FOs and CSOs. (Challenges..., AgriCord)
  - c. A facilitator shall be identified and tasked with FO to FO coordination.
  - d. Joint FO and CSO meetings and plannings through FO-CSO “core groups”/”ad hoc committees” can be organized to facilitate coordination, information sharing, fund accessing, etc. .
  - e. To retain the autonomy of FOs and CSOs engaging state programs and projects, it is recommended that existing FO-CSO advocacy groups (separate from the FO-CSO platforms established for coordination with regards to engagement with public investment programs) shall be maintained for “political decisions. (2014, AgriCord)
2. FO capacity building & learning, including capacity for services delivery, fund raising and campaigning/advocacy, shall be continually pursued throughout the project/engagement with the state.

At the regional level, this means providing technical assistance and capacity building to FOs on the following:

- a. Networking, government policy processes and frameworks;
- b. Constructive engagement/policy advocacy including strategy and tactics; and
- c. Leadership development, organizational management, fund management, including local farmer groups who are members of national FOs.

Below are other capacity building “tools” that may be considered:

- a. To strengthen the capacity of FOs and to support them in their analysis, a “pool of resource persons” with various skills that FOs could tap can be established. Experts in the “pool” can come from FOs of other countries.
- b. Knowledge and experience sharing through south-south and north-south exchanges can also be organized to enhance the knowledge, skills and analysis of FOs.
- c. Sharing of effective technical and advocacy tools such as the FACT approach for advocacy (DRC) , or the establishment and use of database for monitoring of family farms for orientation of the FO’s activities shall also be facilitated.
- d. The lack of information dissemination from government and the lack of consultations by government on public programs have also been major constraints for effective participation of FOs. (2012, AFA et al.)

The following “tools” or tactics can be employed to address such constraint:

- a. Lack of consultation can also be addressed by lobbying for the creation of “National Project Steering Committees” or “Working Groups” with thematic sectors. (2012, AFA et al.) FO-CSO platforms established shall be allowed to participate (and supported by bilateral and multilateral organizations) in international and regional cooperation events.
- b. FOs and CSOs shall pro-actively and assertively seek information by participating and attending meetings (even when uninvited), fora, workshops and dialogues where they can acquire information or lobby for participation in development, management and implementation of public investment programs and projects. FOs and CSOs shall also be unrelenting in following-up requests for information, meetings, dialogues, etc. (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Togo]
- c. Linkages and good relationships with technical staffs/ secretariats of government agencies involved in the management

and implementation of public programs shall be developed and nurtured as they can be good sources of information. They can also be indirect channels for influencing policies through back channel feeding of recommendations and inputs by FOs and CSOs. (Challenges..., AgriCord) [Nepal]

- d. Regular follow-up missions that reiterates/reinforces FO participation shall be continually conducted throughout the program/project period.

***(For other “tools” for Public Program Engagement, please visit [http://asiadhrra.org/wordpress/publications\\_old/manuals/](http://asiadhrra.org/wordpress/publications_old/manuals/))***



# CON CLUSION

**T**he endeavor of involving FOs in the design, management, monitoring and implementation of public investment programs may be a daunting task specially in areas with narrow democratic spaces and significant gaps in trust and acceptance between FOs/CSOs and government players. However, once these democratic spaces are opened wider and the gaps of mistrust are bridged, the synergy of on-ground knowledge and reach of FOs and the government's resources and technical expertise can result in sustained, inclusive and effective rural development.

For FOs, the achievement and synergy of key conditions during the four-step process: 1) identification of capable FOs; 2) mobilization of competent technical support groups; 3) enhanced capacities; 4) established working relationships with government; and 5) creation of an enabling policy environment for participation, can result in a sustained cycle of FOs and governments increasingly becoming more and effective and efficient in developing and implementing public investment programs for food security agriculture development.

However, the need for more “success stories” in participation, more systematic documentation of said successes and studies

establishing empirical evidence on advantages of participation, and the “conversion” of more governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations remains a major challenge.

Hopefully, this handbook has contributed a step towards furthering the task of getting more farmers and their organizations more involved and in control of their lives, development, and destiny.

Specifically, AsiaDHRRRA would like to thank IFAD and AgriCord for supporting this initiative and for believing in the capabilities of farmers all over the world to be capable players in designing and implementing public programs that ultimately involves and affects them.

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## **Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (Asiadhrra)**

AsiaDHRRA traces its earliest roots to the 1974 Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia Workshop (DHRRAW) held in Thailand. It is a regional partnership of eleven (11) social development networks and organizations in eleven (11) Asian nations that envisions Asian rural communities that are just, free, prosperous, living in peace and working in solidarity towards self-reliance. To achieve this, the network's mission is to be effective:

- Promoter and catalyst of partnership relations, creating opportunities for genuine people-to-people dialogue and exchange;
- Facilitator of human resource development processes in the rural areas; and
- Mobilizer of expertise & opportunities for the strengthening of solidarity and kinship among Asian rural communities.

AsiaDHRRA works through DHRRA members, with farmers' organisations, and other CSO partners in 11 countries specifically in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam. It plays an important role in the Asian region as catalyst and co-convenor of CSO platforms and mechanisms for more effective engagement and cooperation with regional organisations such as ASEAN, FAO, ADB and relevant multi-lateral and bilateral agencies.

AsiaDHRRA sees the importance of connecting national and regional grassroots voices with global policy making processes and vice versa recognizing that development issues are interconnected and that reform is most compelled if with a strong demand from those that are directly affected by public policies and programming.

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