



## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

### **Grant 2000001963 “Farmers Forum Steering Committee for Asia and the Pacific”**

**Submitted to:** International Fund for Agricultural Development

**Submitted by:** Asian Farmers’ Association for Sustainable Rural Development

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Farmers’ Forum (FAFO) is a bottom-up process of consultation and dialogue between small farmers and rural producers’ organizations, IFAD and governments for rural development and poverty reduction. Shaped by a consensus document (*see box 1*) that guides the collaboration, the FAFO was established in 2006, as an operational tool to provide orientation to IFAD operations and to jointly identify opportunities for the development of partnerships between IFAD and FOs.<sup>1</sup>

The first FAFO global meeting took place on February 2006, in conjunction with the IFAD Governing Council. Since then, five additional global meetings were held in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016.

In 2014, a study of the partnerships between IFAD and Farmers’ Organizations (FOs) noted that the momentum of these partnerships had reached a plateau, whereas country-level engagement with FOs was diminishing. One of the reasons identified was that the global FAFO process was too focused at the global level while collaboration and dialogue at regional and country level, i.e. where IFAD operates, was not systematic and thus, opportunities were lost.

In this context, during the 6th Global meeting of the Farmers’ Forum held in 2016, the FAFO Steering Committee (SC) members agreed to decentralize the FAFO process and to begin holding regional level FAFOs in order to ‘be closer’ to the farmers and to foster greater involvement of IFAD regional divisions and country programs. As such, the process will now be organized on a four-year basis with global meetings organized every four years (hence with the next one occurring in 2020) and regional consultations where IFAD operates organized in between. In addition, it was also decided to use the IFAD geographical structure for the organization of the regional FAFOs, and whenever possible to organize the regional FAFOs in concomitance with the IFAD regional divisions’ implementation workshops, in order to facilitate interactions between FOs, IFAD and the IFAD funded projects and programs.

To kick off preparations for the regional FAFO, IFAD advised the global FAFO steering committee members who are present in a particular region to agree among themselves who can be the grant recipient of the IFAD funds and will coordinate the

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<sup>1</sup> Report on the first Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Farmers Forum, held May 21-23, 2017, Kampala, Uganda.



conduct of the regional FAFO. In Asia Pacific, representatives of AFA, La Via Campesina, World Forum on Fishers' Peoples (WFFP), and World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) agreed to have AFA as the grant recipient; and this decision was communicated to the then IFAD Asia Pacific Region Director Hoonae Kim through a letter signed by representatives of these organizations.

Thus, IFAD entered into a grant agreement with the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), to act as a neutral facilitator, on behalf of the Farmers' Forum Regional Steering Committee (FAFO RSC) for Asia Pacific Region, (APR) managing the regional grant contribution and organizing the regional Farmers Forum. A grant of \$130,000 was given by IFAD to finance the preparatory work for the regional FAFO meeting, for setting the agenda and list of participants, support the production of case studies, organize and facilitate the regional meeting of the FAFO, including travel and accommodation of about 30/40 delegates of FOs selected by the FAFO RSC to the regional meeting, providing interpretation and reporting.

## **PREPARATIONS FOR THE APR FAFO**

1. Two face-to-face (ftf) meetings and regular email and virtual calls were held leading to the actual conduct of the APR FAFO.

The first ftf meeting was held last December 15, 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal, with one representative each from LVC, WFF, WFFP and AFA. The participants to this meeting agreed to expand the composition of the Steering Committee to include World Farmers' Organization (WFO) as it is also a member of the Steering Committee of the global FAFO. The participants developed initial plans as to the venue, the criteria and composition of participants to the APR FAFO. *please see Annex 1 for highlights of APR FAFO SC meeting, 2017.12.15*

The second ftf meeting was held last May 28, 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. This served as the first meeting of the complete APR FAFO steering committee (SC), composed of one representative each from the following organizations: AFA /Esther Penunia, La Via Campesina/Zainal Fuad, INOFO/Weng Buena, WFF/Ujjaini Halim, WFFP/Herman Kumara, and WFO/ Ien in behalf of Sok Sotha. Hubert Boirard, MTCP2 Task Manager, attended the meeting as well. In this meeting, the SC agreed to add one more organization in the Steering Committee, which is PIFON (Pacific Islands Farmer Organizations' Network) as no one from the existing SC members had affiliates in the Pacific region. The SC developed a general design and program as well as composition and number of target participants. *Please see Annex 2 for highlights of APR FAFO SC meeting 2018.05.28*



2. After this May 2018 meeting, AFA liaised with IFAD through MTCP2 Task Manager Mr. Hubert Boirard as well as with the SC and the local host to finalize the program, the meeting venue, the accommodations and all other logistics arrangements for the participants, especially round trip economy plane tickets. Communications were basically through email exchanges, skype and what's app. AFA sought the partnership of its Indonesia member, Aliansi Petani Indonesia, to be the local host of the APR FAFO to assist in all logistics preparations for the APR FAFO.

## THE WORKSHOP PROPER

1. The APR FAFO was held last October 20, 2018 at Hyatt Hotel, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It was held in between an IFAD Retreat Workshop and Academy. It was attended by 84 FO leaders from 21<sup>2</sup> countries, with a combined membership of 38M small scale farmers, fishers, forest dwellers, herders and pastoralists as well as 37 staff from IFAD's APR division, led by Nigel Brett, its Director. The event's Chief Guest was Mr. Anwar Sanusi, Secretary General, Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration.

The program was divided into four parts: Opening Program, Presentation of Good Practices of IFAD-FO partnership at country levels, Country Round Table Discussions and reading of the Joint Statement. *Please See Annex 3: program schedule; Annex 4 : Attendance Sheet; Annex 5 : Proceedings of the APR FAFO 2018; Annex 6 : Joint IFAD-FO statement; Annex 7 : <http://asianfarmers.org/asia-pacific-farmers-forum/>*

2. The SC also managed the conduct of the Farmers Forum Autonomous space, held October 19, 2018. The main objective of this autonomous space is to level off on the understanding about FAFO processes at global, regional and national level and to prepare the participants for the actual APR FAFO the following day. Mr. Hubert Boirard, MTCP2 Task Manager and Mr. Nicolas Sayed, Program Officer gave inspirational messages and presentations about FAFO processes. Identified FO leaders gave presentation on the context and situation at the sub regional level (SEA, SA, EA, Pacific). Sub regional workshops were then held to share updates and challenges on FO-IFAD partnerships at country levels. The meeting ended with presenting the program for the actual FAFO and clarifying expectations and desired results of the first APR FAFO. *Please see Annex 8 for Proceedings of APR FAFO 2018 Autonomous Space.*
3. The local host facilitated the field visit to Tani Organic Merapi (TOM), an organic farm. Staff and farmer leaders took turns in explaining and demonstrating how the farm owners make their own organic fertilizers and pesticides and practice integrated pest management.

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<sup>2</sup> Countries include Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines Thailand and Vietnam in SEA; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka in South Asia; and China and Mongolia in East Asia; Fiji, Samoa, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tleste in Pacific.



4. A solidarity and cultural night were also held during dinner on October 20. The FAFO participants appreciated the presence of IFAD's Mr. Hubert Boirard and SIS Mission Team member Alok Singh who joined the celebration.

Please view the APR video production here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGGItAeP5mQ&t=106s>

## REFLECTIONS

1. The APR FAFO FO participants conducted a reflection session on Oct 21, 2018 in the morning. Most of the participants appreciated the process in the APR FAFO. Everyone had positive feelings and hopes that forging of partnerships will be easier now that there are concrete actions and commitments in each country from the roundtable discussions that happened the following day. *Please see Annex 9 for the highlights of the reflection of APR FAFO participants.* #

*AFA/ June 28, 2019*