

PPSA's Discussion on Grow Asia's Future Strategy

21 July 2020 | 3:00 – 4:30 Philippines

Objectives

- Provide a report on progress of the Grow Asia network across Southeast Asia
- Solicit input from PPSA's members and partners on Grow Asia's future strategy

Insights from the Department of Agriculture

William Dar, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

- Recognized that the nation is burdened by huge challenges. These challenges include poverty, food insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which claimed lives and paralyzed the global economy.
- The challenges allow us to recognize the need for stronger national and regional partnerships and make us realize that we cannot go business as usual anymore. Instead, the battle cry is to 'Survive. Reboot. Grow' under the 'Plant. Plant. Plant. Program'
- Highlighted the need to do the following
 - Discuss initiatives taken so far
 - Identify what can be done
 - Explore knowledge sharing opportunities within the network
- The Department of Agriculture advocates Food Systems Policy Shifts and the Food Security Framework with the following priorities:
 - Job Generation and Entrepreneurial activities
 - Strengthened Partnerships with the Private Sector
 - Agri Fishery Value Chain Integration and Logistics
- With partnerships, we can survive the challenges and make the market work better
- Strategies to elevate our gain should be explored

Response to the DA's Insights

Grahame Dixie, Executive Director, Grow Asia

The works of Grow Asia and PPSA align with the points raised by Secretary Dar, especially now during the pandemic. These initiatives include the COVID-19 response efforts, rural logistics, mobile economy, and digital marketing solutions - all geared towards creating a balance and modernizing the farming sector and making it sustainable.

Grow Asia Report on Progress and Future Strategy

Grahame Dixie, Executive Director, Grow Asia

- A few highlights from our work at the Country Partnerships level
 - 520+ partners
 - 1.8 million farmers reached
 - Added a Country Partnership – Papua New Guinea
 - 46 Working Groups
 - 50 Sub-Projects, of which only 24% of projects are mature – implying there we will be delivering significantly more as a network looking to the future.
 - Gender Mainstreaming - 33% of WG partners are represented by women
 - 40,000 views of videos communicating learnings from the Grow Asia network

- Funding:
 - Australia supporting with 2nd tranche of funding through 2022
 - Additional funds from Australia for Grow PNG, the newest Country Partnership
 - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation providing 3 years of funding for the ASEAN Guidelines for Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry. Likely to fund for 7 more years.
 - Facing a shortfall from 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, but are building relationships with a slew of public organizations for support (including regional donors like Japan, China and Korea). Also looking to private sector to fund specific programs (e.g. gender)
- Grow Asia is now an accredited Entity Associated with ASEAN – first WEF-initiated organization to achieve this status. This accreditation allows Grow Asia to access funds in much easier ways.
- Overview of Grow Asia's Twin Track Strategy
 - Track 1 - Our work at the Country Partnerships Level
 - CPs that are increasingly independent, fully autonomous and fully self-managed
 - PPSA has a good structure with high-level officials leading the dialogues and initiatives - the DA and Unilever as co-chairs and big companies actively engaged
 - The area PPSA should work on is improving the number of farmers reached
 - Increase professionalism of our teams - including establishing Customer Relationship Management platform
 - Increasing responsiveness to global issues; PPSA has been cutting edge in its response to COVID-19, gathering information on what is happening on the ground and using it to make practical and policy/regulatory recommendations.
 - Increasing membership base, especially representation from domestic businesses and farmer organizations.
 - Increasingly robust Monitoring & Evaluation process for the Country Partnerships and Working Groups.
 - The partnership benefits usually asked from Grow Asia include:
 - Learn
 - Meet/Network/Find partners
 - Become part of dialogues on policy issues
 - *Something new came in:* Branding or Reputational benefits from good partnerships
 - Track 2 – Our work at the Regional Level
 - Greater emphasis on Knowledge Exchange (learning events, case studies, videos, creating communities of practice)
 - Knowledge sharing on going to scale: What makes a successful working group? What makes a successful inclusive value chain?
 - Closer relationship with ASEAN: ASEAN Guidelines on Responsible Investing in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (initiated by ASEAN, completed by Grow Asia and our partners), ASEAN Action Plan on Fall Armyworm Control (endorsed by ASEAN, driven by Grow Asia, IFAD and the Government of Viet Nam), ASEAN Level response to COVID-19 (ongoing, driven by WEF, IFAD and Grow Asia), and Grow Asia's recent accreditation as an Entity Associated with ASEAN (19 July 2020).
 - Expanding our Digital Program
 - Convening regional Working Groups in response to COVID-19: rural logistics, digital marketing, mobile money, digital enabling infrastructure & policy for farmers

- Gender Mainstreaming as a key priority
- Strong push for core and workstream-specific funding

Support Grow Asia will provide PPSA:

Pranav Sethaputra, Partnerships Manager, Grow Asia

- Pranav shared that GA has funds for PPSA until end of 2022
 - Funding
 - In addition to core funding (that could support WG activities), Grow Asia will provide additional resources to use for events and WG consultants. Of note - Grow Asia's WG consultant rubric will be very similar to the one developed to access PPSA's WG funding pool, but will include more significant indicators related to gender mainstreaming / women's economic empowerment
 - For PPSA's sustainability, funding sources should continuously be sought
 - Strategic Support:
 - GA will also continue to support PPSA and PPSA's partners with linking PPSA and its partners to opportunities coming in from regional players (e.g., the World Bank)
 - Create a stronger linkage between PPSA activities and GA's regional programs
 - Continue to share learnings from across the region

Responses from the Participants:

Moderated by Veejay Calutan, Engagement Manager, PPSA

- Role of PPSA
 - PPSA and Grow Asia partnership is a two-track approach: PPSA is more operational and localized, while Grow Asia focuses on strategies and policy advocacy
 - Role is relevant, apt, and very critical to what the government would like to do; the team is always there and willing to support
 - Expertise are in the areas of information dissemination and integrated assessments
 - Synergies are witnessed due to PPSA engagements
 - Suggestions moving forward
 - PPSA should be more visible in roadmap revisions
 - PPSA should broaden scope while establishing focus
 - Increase partnerships and reach partners even more, diversify further, and earn along the way
 - Look into how project pitch in a larger picture; review impact and scale at both the national and regional levels
 - Become the voice to the sectoral discussions and issues
 - The times are uncertain but we should continue focusing on the smallholder farmers; to pivot and align to respond to unique challenges
 - SEARCA is willing to collaborate with PPSA in the areas of research response on equitable and resilient food systems, and policy development; ISEA on women economic empowerment in agricultural value chains
 - Look into Resolution #45 as there is an opportunity to partner with the DA on food security (efforts on nutrition and sustainable agriculture led by Cabinet Secretary Nograles)
- Functions of the Working Groups and Roles of its Members

- Identify or develop concrete programs and projects- this is what companies could fund over the general pool of funds
- Would like to see other players and more synergies among the working group members
- Fishing industry is quite young but fish farming becoming too expensive due to rents; Projects are being delayed due to permits, which are in some cases, cancelled by city mayors - There might be rules or best practices in other country that we can benchmark on or localize based on our needs (Grow Asia's response to this: The learning exchange is Grow Asia's value adding. Given the pandemic, web-based platforms are being introduced to enable direct conversations of working group or task force members from various country partnerships.
- Support of Grow Asia
 - PPSA has a holistic view of the regional and local landscape, which can be attributed to the support provided by Grow Asia
 - Grow Asia's support can focus on responding to issues such as food waste, greenhouse emissions, land use, and land security, which can be best addressed on a regional level
 - Looking for or anticipating more regional support to the local (Country Partnerships)
- Commodity Roadmaps -
 - There is a need to revisit and review the commodity or crop roadmaps (low-hanging fruit), identify key performance indicators, and agree on timelines
 - Response to this: The DA is open to revisiting the roadmaps and insert sections on resilience, with UnderSecretary Visera assigned to engage in the process
- Funding
 - Softer funding opportunities are expected from companies considering the COVID-19 pandemic but organizations like PBSP and PPSA stay true to their missions and carry out their works despite the financing challenges
 - Though companies are critical on what to spend for, companies provide funding for projects or initiatives that are impactful, have added value, and innovative
- Food Access, Resilience, and Security
 - Some crops are well-positioned and better guided through roadmaps but others through food security and food access approach
 - Food resilience is a compounded issue that brings about various disruptions; Policy briefs on disruptions in the current food systems are needed
- Research and Learning Exchange
 - Despite the pandemic, there is a wealth of information and resources to beat the uncertain times.
 - Highlight the information on two types: partnerships or multi-stakeholder engagements and smallholder farmers; The links should continue engagements in agriculture but at the same time, support the aspirations of the farmers
 - Uncertain times can be appeased if we have information and innovations that can affect decision-making - as the lack of information offers more uncertainties
 - Research can support the agriculture sector; Research, information dissemination, and capacity building are important in generating inclusive and sustainable solutions
 - Look for new partnership models

Welcoming the new Country Director

Joyce Franzly Racoma-Gomez, outgoing PPSA Country Director

- Thanked the PPSA members for the support and the years of working together
- Introduced the new Country Director

Amy Melissa Chua, new PPSA Country Director

- Thanked the outgoing Country Director; Requested for active participation and engagement; Informed members to anticipate followthrough dialogues

Closing Remarks:

Ed Sunico, VP -SEA Communications, Unilever on behalf of Benjie Yap, PPSA Co-Chair, CEO Unilever Philippines

- While approaches vary, all partners are aligned with the objectives of supporting the Philippine food system more effectively, with the smallholders at its center
- The connection with Grow Asia open avenues for us to both contribute to systems change at a regional and global level
- There is an opportunity for the PPSA to support the work of the DA and act as a facilitator/bridge among the private and public sectors and other players
- Impact at scale can only be achieved through concerted, national-level collaboration and guided by national crop-specific action plans.
- Welcomed Amy Chua as the new Country Director and thanked Joyce Gomez for her works and milestones in the past years

List of Attendees:

Name	Organization
Mai Alagcan	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
Christine Pahlman	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Mac Garcia	Department of Agriculture
William Dar	Department of Agriculture
Dexter Difuntorum	East-West Seed
Mary Ann Sayoc	East-West Seed
Norberto Chingcuanco	Feedmix
Anton Simon Palo	Food Advocacy Cooperative (FAC)
Erin Sweeney	Grow Asia
Grahame Dixie	Grow Asia
Nadia Soerjanto	Grow Asia
Pranav Sethaputra	Grow Asia



Gomer Padong	Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA)
Ruth Novales	Nestlé
Genevieve Santiago	NutriAsia
Elvin Uy	Philippine Business for Social Progress
Amy Melissa Chua	PPSA
Joyce Gomez	PPSA
Veejay Calutan	PPSA
Nova Ramos	SEARCA
Pedcris Orencio	SEARCA
Ed Sunico	Unilever
Lavin Gonzaga	Unilever
Rondell Torres	Unilever