

# SEAMEO SEARCA

8<sup>TH</sup> FIVE-YEAR PLAN  
2005-2009



*First Draft*  
October 2003

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## SEARCA: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

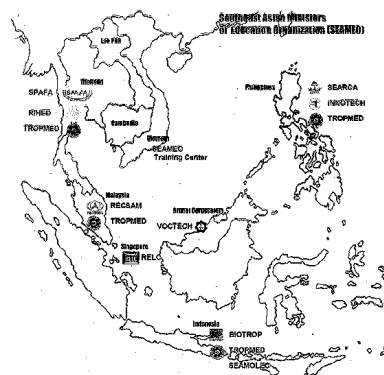
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### Brief History

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The SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) was established in 1966 by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), a chartered international organization whose purpose is to promote cooperation in education, science, and culture in the Southeast Asian region. The proposal on SEARCA's formation was approved in November 1966 during the Second Conference of the SEAMEO Council. In June 1967, an Agricultural Advisory Council (AAC) was formed to formulate guidelines on the organization and operation of the proposed center.



SEARCA operated on an interim basis from 1 July 1967 to 30 June 1969. During this time, the project blueprint, detailing the Center's academic programs, financing, and staffing, was developed and subsequently approved by the AAC. On 1 July 1969, SEARCA began its operation as a permanent center of SEAMEO after the Letter of Agreement regarding its establishment, operations, and funding for five years was signed by representatives of the SEAMEO Council, SEARCA, and the governments of the Philippines and the United States of America.

SEARCA has three main mandates: 1) to provide to the participating countries high quality graduate study in agriculture; 2) to promote, undertake and coordinate applied research programs related specifically to the needs and problems of the Southeast Asian region; and 3) to disseminate the findings of research and experimentation.

### Organization

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SEARCA is hosted by the Philippine government on the campus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Operating autonomously from UPLB, SEARCA is managed by a Filipino director and two deputy directors, one of whom is a non-Filipino, but a national of a SEAMEO member country, and the other, a Filipino.

SEARCA's policy-making body is the Governing Board (GB), which is composed of a representative from each SEAMEO member country. The representatives are nominated by their respective ministers of education and appointed by the SEAMEO Council. The SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) director and the SEARCA director serve as ex-officio members of the Board. The SEARCA Governing Board is responsible for operational policies, strategic planning, and annual review and evaluation of the Center's programs and budget within the framework of its approved five-year development plan.

## Objectives

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SEARCA's general objectives, as specified in its Enabling Instrument, are as follows:

1. To provide participating countries with high-quality graduate education and training in agriculture;
2. To promote, undertake, and coordinate research programs related to the development needs and problems in agriculture of the region; and
3. To disseminate the findings of agricultural research and experimentation.

## Functions

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Specifically, SEARCA's functions are:

1. To promote and facilitate high-quality graduate study programs leading to the master's and doctoral degrees through collaborating institutions;
2. To provide graduate scholarships, fellowships, and/or assistantships for students from member countries;
3. To provide direction and funds for research by graduate students, faculty members, and other cooperating research workers of member countries;
4. To promote, undertake, and coordinate research programs, as instituted and supported by the Center, with special emphasis on research related to the needs and pressing problems of agriculture in Southeast Asia;
5. To publish the findings of agricultural research done in the region, or other pertinent research done elsewhere;
6. To hold short-term training courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences on selected agricultural problems and topics;
7. To provide advisory and consulting services to member countries through staff visits and exchanges, seminars, and participation in relevant training and extension programs;
8. To stimulate and assist further development of agricultural institutions in Southeast Asia, and to enlist their efforts in a concerted attack on agricultural problems of the region; and
9. To engage in income-generating activities that will further promote the aims of the Center.

## Funding

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SEARCA's **Operating Funds**, which is used mainly for administration and management and core staff salaries and benefits, is donated by the Philippine government. The **Special Funds**, which is generated and provided by the SEAMEO Secretariat, is used to support the Center's graduate scholarship and short-term training programs, Governing Board meetings, seminars and conferences, and personnel exchanges. Such fund is composed of contributions of SEAMEO member and associate member countries, partner governments, organizations, and individuals to the SEAMEO Educational Development Fund (SEDF). **Other Funds**, which is composed of funds for research and development and other extension activities that are not included in the operating budget, comes from donor agencies, government and non-government organizations, and other institutions that collaborate with SEARCA in its programs and projects. **Unallocated Funds** consists of funds received from donors, interest earnings, and earnings from approved income-generating activities that have not been identified as Operating, Special, and Other Funds.

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## THE CHALLENGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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The past two decades have witnessed remarkable economic and social achievements in the economies of Southeast Asian countries. Economic growth has been quite rapid compared to the most of the other regions of the world. This has been accompanied by improvement in living standards, reduction in poverty and food insecurity, rise in literacy, and improvement in health status of the population.

However, these changes have not been uniform across countries within the region, nor across areas or population groups within a country. Poverty and food insecurity remain as pressing concerns in most of the agriculture- and natural resource-dependent economies of the region. Indeed, in these countries, poverty is largely a rural phenomenon: the vast majority of the poor are dependent on agriculture and agriculture-related industries for employment and income. Even urban poverty is, in part, a spillover effect of intense deprivation in rural areas where access to education, infrastructure, technology, and finance is acutely limited.

Agricultural and rural development continues to hold the key to sustained economic development and poverty reduction in the region. Concurrently, the stability of the region as a whole hinges critically on the success of each member country to combat poverty and food insecurity, especially in rural areas. Poverty is a fertile ground for violence, insurgency, and terrorism, whose consequences have no respect for territorial boundaries.

Despite recent economic growth in some countries in the region, the enormity of development problems and policy challenges to get agricultural development moving cannot be overemphasized. Recurring issues on population pressure, natural resource degradation, and governance appear to be more pressing now than ever before. New challenges are likewise emerging, resulting partly from the same factors that have fueled recent economic growth and partly from regional and global developments in trade, finance, and technology. Globalization is here to stay; it can prove to be either boon or bane for poor people in agriculture and rural areas, depending, to some extent, on initial circumstances of a country, but more so on the country's policy responses to this new environment.

Against this backdrop, SEARCA aptly recognizes the important role it plays in catalyzing agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia, and has thus laid out its plans for addressing the important issues and pressing problems in these areas that confront the region.

This Eighth Five-Year Plan sets out the vision, mission, and goals of SEARCA and outlines the major strategies that will be undertaken by the Center during the period July 2004 - June 2009. The plan is organized around seven goals and covers the major programs and management concerns of SEARCA. It will be the basis for the development of annual operational plans of each office, department, and unit in the Center, and will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.

The plan comes at the heels of a major reorganization that aimed to streamline the Center's work processes and ensure a more efficient implementation of its various strategies. It is hoped that with a renewed mandate, coherent strategies, and a more responsive structure, SEARCA would be geared up to support SEAMEO member countries in facing the challenges of agricultural and rural development.

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## **VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES**

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### **VISION**

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#### **Southeast Asia's Leader in the Science and Practice of Agriculture and Rural Development**

SEARCA is envisioned to meet contemporary development challenges and provide leadership in enabling an environment for sustainable agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia.

Realizing this vision in the face of stiff competition for development resources from the donor community, including the host Government, is a daunting challenge. Business-as-usual for the Center is obviously not an appropriate response to this challenge. The Center needs to closely examine its programs and activities, asking whether they fall within the vision/mission, or whether there is a need to refocus them – or prioritize them – to achieve better results, given its basic mandate and fiscal bind. The aim is to accomplish more with less, while not losing sight of the need to expand funding sources.

### **MISSION**

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#### **We are committed to strengthening institutional capacity in agricultural and rural development through graduate education, research, training, and knowledge exchange.**

By fostering opportunities for high-quality education and training in agriculture, promoting agricultural research, and disseminating research findings, SEARCA serves as a major vehicle for advancing the goals of poverty reduction, food security, and human resource development in Southeast Asia. In so doing, the Center enhances regional security and contributes to the building of prosperous and equitable societies in the region, thus adhering to SEAMEO's overall mission of regional cooperation as the foundation for its existence.

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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1. **SEARCA aims to promote sound management of natural resources and rural growth toward agricultural and rural development (ARD). Toward this end, it will:**
  - a. Expand the breadth and depth of technical expertise and enhance the managerial skills of agriculture professionals;
  - b. Conduct appropriate and relevant research to address poverty reduction and food security concerns;
  - c. Continuously acquire, process, share knowledge on ARD through information and communication technology; and
  - d. Provide venues for articulating policy options on emerging development issues in the region.
  
2. **To enhance its organizational credibility and viability, SEARCA will:**
  - a. Enhance its performance through effective and efficient program management and administrative support systems;
  - b. Forge and strengthen strategic partnerships, alliances, networks, and linkages; and
  - c. Ensure its long-term financial viability through responsible fiscal management and intensive resource generation.

In these times of financial challenges, we press onward with our institutional goals. We know that our success in achieving these goals will depend on our ability to devise and deliver innovative strategies that address common needs and harness the strengths of countries and institutions in the region.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

On 1 October 2003, SEARCA put in place an organizational structure that would deliver its programs in a most effective and efficient manner. Part and parcel of the structural change was the streamlining of the Center's staff complement to the bare essentials in order to have a financially viable and sustainable configuration.

The structure (Figure 1) was so designed such that it will:

1. support key program focus;
2. ensure effectiveness of coordination among allied units;
3. provide flexibility to address the need to easily reconfigure capacity due to changes in the external environment; and
4. manage human resource costs.

Essentially, the structure trimmed down SEARCA to its core businesses (i.e., Graduate Education, Short-Term Training, Research and Development, and Knowledge Exchange).

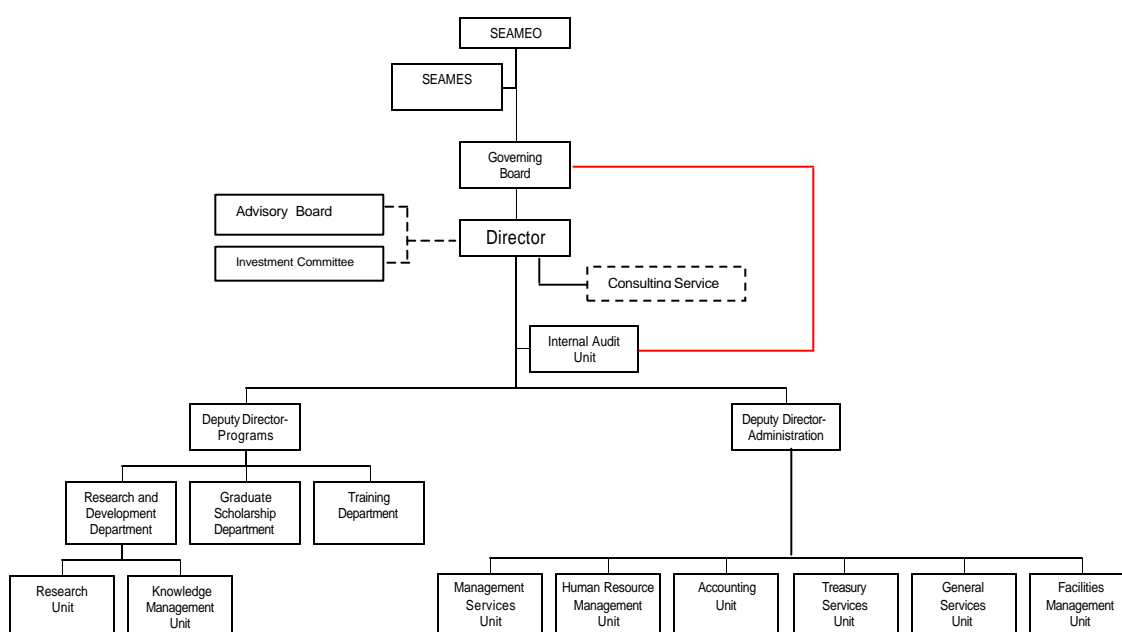


Figure 1. SEARCA Organizational Structure, 1 October 2003.

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## PRIORITY THEMES AND TOPICS

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In the next five years, SEARCA's pursuits and activities shall fall into two general priority themes with wide-ranging ramifications -- **Natural Resource Management** and **Rural Growth Promotion**. SEARCA sees these themes as two of the major avenues where substantial and concerted efforts should be devoted in order to make significant dents on the ever-pervasive challenges of poverty and food insecurity in most of Southeast Asia. In all of these, human resource development remains to be the key in meeting the challenges posed by natural resource management and rural growth promotion.

Rural areas account for roughly two-thirds of the poor in Southeast Asia. This underscores the low level of productivity of the largely agriculture-based rural economy. Studies have amply shown that where rural growth is low, poverty predominates. And where poverty abounds, the threats on the natural resource base are heightened. The causes and interrelations of these elements, though, are far from being this simplistic and linear. Yet, the bottom line is simple: agriculture-led rural development leads to poverty reduction and food security.

### **Natural Resource Management**

SEARCA fully recognizes the fact and reality that the ability of agriculture to effectively and sustainably address the twin goals of food security and poverty reduction depends, to a large extent, on the integrity of the natural resource base. Hence, the importance that the Center has placed on Natural Resource Management. Today, resource base degradation, biodiversity loss, and increasing water scarcity have become even more serious concerns of each country in the region. The issues involved are complex and multifaceted, and comprehensive solutions are not yet in sight. SEARCA submits that enhancing productivity at a sustainable level with judicious use of resources would not only ensure food security but would arrest poverty-induced environmental degradation as well.

The Natural Resource Management theme will focus on: (a) sustainable land use and water management and (b) biodiversity conservation for food security. Specifically, sustainable land use and water management will tackle concerns on watershed management, integrated water resources management, and soil conservation/land use management. Biodiversity conservation, on the other hand, will be along resource profiling and assessment, resource management and planning, and environmental valuation and modeling.

### **Rural Growth Promotion**

Rural growth is the key to sustained poverty reduction and food security among developing countries of Southeast Asia. Various research as well as the experiences of some countries within and outside Southeast Asia (e.g., China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand) provide strong evidence in support of this proposition.

In virtually all these cases, agricultural growth has played a major role in stimulating non-farm production and employment growth (i.e., rural industrialization), which has enabled these countries to take big leaps in terms of reducing poverty and providing food security at the household level.

Hence, the foremost challenge to development organizations such as SEARCA is identifying the fundamental problems and constraints to rural growth and providing solutions to these. And through this Eighth Five-Year Plan, SEARCA is taking the bull by its horns by zeroing in on agricultural/rural growth promotion as one of its two guiding posts in carrying out its vision and mission.

This zeroing in on causes and stimulants will essentially mean working for the improvement of four areas that have significant bearing on agricultural and rural growth, namely: (a) quality of human capital, (b) access to productive resources and technology, (c) policy and institutional constraints, and (d) rural support services/systems.

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND OUTPUTS

SEARCA shall carry out its strategies and achieve its goals through its four core programs:

- A. Graduate Scholarship
- B. Research and Development
- C. Short-Term Training
- D. Knowledge Exchange

These programs, in close interaction and complementarity, will focus on research and capacity-building activities that will stimulate consciousness and capacity on natural resource management and rural growth promotion toward poverty reduction and food security (Figure 2).

SEARCA's success will be defined mainly by the quality of its programs and services as well as by the extent to which its partners and clients have access to and can use the information that the Center generates.

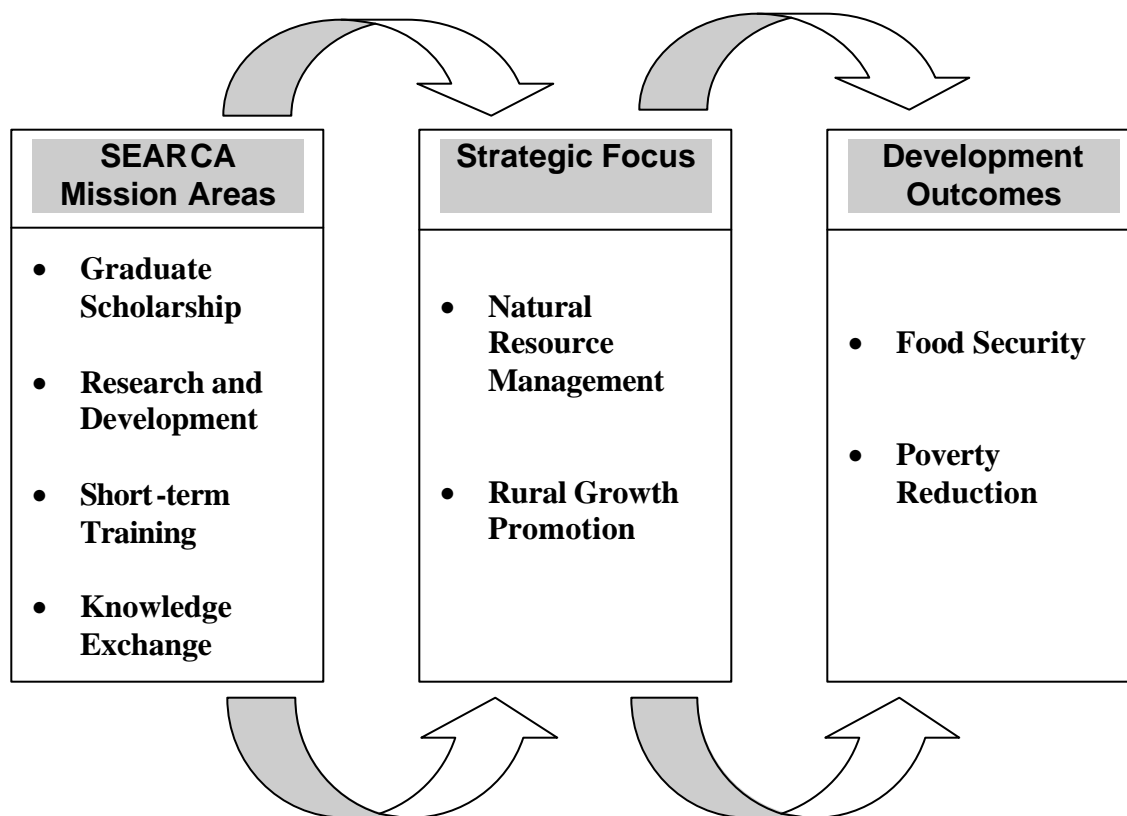


Figure 2. Mission Areas, Strategic Focus, and Development Outcomes

## A. GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

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Among the specific functions of SEARCA as indicated in its Enabling Instrument are: a) to promote and facilitate high-quality graduate programs leading to the master's and doctor's degrees in agriculture and related sciences; and b) to provide graduate scholarships, fellowships, and/or assistantships for students from member countries. To carry out its mandate and specific functions, the Graduate Scholarship Program of SEARCA, which was started in School Year 1968-69, provides scholarships that would allow highly qualified and deserving nationals of SEAMEO member countries to pursue their master's and doctoral degrees in agriculture and related sciences. Through the program, SEARCA strives to prepare scholarship grantees for positions of leadership in their respective countries – positions that would allow them to help shape the directions for Southeast Asian agricultural and rural development.

SEARCA has strong linkages with institutions of higher learning in the region that provide top quality graduate degree programs and have the academic facilities needed for the long-term training of scholars and fellows. The establishment of the **University Consortium (UC)** in 1989 was initiated by SEARCA mainly to add value to its Graduate Scholarship Program. It enables stronger universities in Southeast Asia and selected universities in Australia, Canada, and Germany to pool available resources and expertise to enhance graduate education in the region. The participation of these universities highlights the contributions of five SEAMEO members and three Associate Member countries to address pressing concerns in agriculture and natural resources in Southeast Asia. The Consortium arrangement allows activities such as student and faculty exchanges, research fellowships, professorial chairs, thesis grants and special projects on topics of mutual interest to the members. These activities enable sharing of information, expertise and facilities as well as the enhancement of the UC participants' social and cultural perspectives. The only one of its kind for agriculture and natural resources in Southeast Asia, the University Consortium will continue to be a strong partner of SEARCA in raising funds for scholarships and crafting the future of agricultural graduate education in the region.



## PRIORITIES

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In the next five years, SEARCA envisions to produce would-be leaders who can truly assist in enhancing agricultural development and finding solutions to reduce poverty, while ensuring food security in the region. Despite the fact that SEARCA has been implementing this program for the past 37 years, it sees the need to continuously develop highly trained professionals who shall later on take the lead in development work in their respective countries as well as in the region.



SEARCA's role in agricultural HRD is greatly challenged by the limited scholarship and fellowship funds made available from traditional sources. Over the years, SEARCA has been exerting efforts to obtain more funds from non-traditional sources, collaborators, and partners. Despite these efforts, donor funds continue to dwindle while support from the host government continue to decline. Added to that is the increasing competition brought about by the existence of a number of HRD service providers competing for the same scholarship grants.

Given these, and in addition to the continuous importance of agriculture in Southeast Asia as well as the availability of donors and funding agencies still interested in supporting agricultural development work, SEARCA will strive to capitalize on the following strengths to generate more resources for the scholarships:

- its track record in graduate scholarship administration;
- the diversity of its fund sources and schemes;
- its network of academic institutions and alumni; and
- its unique personalized service to its clientele.

The theses and dissertation research of scholars and fellows shall focus on natural resource management and conservation and rural growth promotion. In particular, their work will deal with topics or issues on sustainable land use for food security, biodiversity conservation, watershed management, resource and environmental economics, policy studies, and comparative country studies.

SEARCA, together with the University Consortium, shall beef up efforts to link its graduate education activities to a well thought-of R&D plan, with outputs of its grantees translated into information materials that can be used by colleges and universities to enhance agriculture curricula, and by policy- and decision-makers, researchers, and planners for regional agriculture development.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND OUTPUTS

The Graduate Scholarship Program will seek to provide more opportunities to qualified men and women to pursue study programs that will allow them to contribute solutions to the agricultural and rural development challenges in the region.

The next five year's objective's, strategies, and outputs are:

<b>Objective 1: To increase the number of scholarship slots per year.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p><b>Seek to establish a more diversified donor base and sources of funds for scholarships by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tapping into fund sources that focus on specific HRD needs of a particular sub-region.</li> <li>Vigorously pursuing efforts to develop proposals for scholarship projects.</li> <li>Tapping sources at the national level within SEAMEO member countries.</li> <li>Using the University Consortium as leverage for fund-raising.</li> <li>Exploring collaboration for scholarship projects with networks such as the University Consortium, the Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines (ACAP), and Regional SEARCA Fellows Association (RSFA).</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New funding sources that would enable SEARCA to award more scholarships every year (at a rate of 20% increase per year over previous year's figure)</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2: To increase the number of top-level agriculture professionals in the region.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enlarge the pool of highly qualified applicants by advertising the scholarships as widely as possible.</li> <li>Improve recruitment and selection procedures to increase the diversity of applicants and be able to select the best and the brightest.</li> <li>Use the fellows and alumni network of SEARCA as source of highly qualified applicants.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased percentage of highly qualified scholarship candidates from among the nominees from 62% to 85%</li> <li>Increased completion rate from 84% to 95%</li> <li>Reduced percentage of overstaying scholars from 28% to 10% by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year</li> <li>Increased percentage of top-level agriculture professionals among SEARCA fellows from 10% to 25% within 5 years</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 3: To enhance SEARCA's relevance and visibility in the region.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p><b>3.1 Ensure alignment of scholars' research outputs to address pressing regional concerns and issues by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Focusing research topics of scholars, thesis grantees, and faculty research fellows on SEARCA's priority themes.</li> <li>b. Publishing the results of scholars' research in refereed journals.</li> <li>c. Designing re-entry programs for SEARCA graduates to be implemented in their respective institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research that focuses on SEARCA's priority thrusts and addresses food security and poverty reduction concerns</li> <li>• At least 5 articles published in refereed journals per year</li> <li>• Implemented at least one re-entry program every two years that would showcase immediate application of knowledge and skills learned as well as the immediate effect of the program</li> </ul>

## B. Short-Term Training

SEARCA's Short-Term Training Program was launched in 1970 mainly for the benefit of SEAMEO member countries that cannot allow qualified staff to go on long-term degree training. Since then, the Center's training courses at the regional and in-country levels have been the fast lane to imbuing agricultural development workers with specific technical and managerial knowledge and skills and eventually improving the performance of the organizations where they belong.



Specifically, the Program aims to: 1) upgrade technical, scientific, and management skills of intended clientele in SEAMEO member countries; 2) integrate proven and tested technologies and processes on agricultural and rural development into teaching and learning materials; 3) foster collaboration and networking on agricultural concerns and other related activities among SEAMEO member countries and other developing countries; and 4) enhance, through actual interaction, appreciation for the various Southeast Asian cultures.

## PRIORITIES



training of trainers (ToT) programs that would lead participants to initiate action projects in their respective countries.

SEARCA's Short-term Training Program in the next five years will aim at producing a critical mass of agricultural professionals in the region who possess not only advanced technical and managerial knowledge and skills but also imbued with pragmatic regional and global perspectives, a deep sense of social responsibility, and strong decision-making influence to address regional and global agriculture and rural development issues and concerns. Thus, SEARCA will continue to provide training in areas necessary to underpin the implementation of natural resource management and rural growth promotion strategies. This calls for the development and implementation of relevant and high-quality

Although the goal to reduce poverty and food insecurity is a multifaceted and complex endeavor, SEARCA will prioritize its training program offerings on areas where it can make significant interventions, given its available resources and capabilities. Even if these programs do not directly target the poor, the scope and design of SEARCA's training courses shall help promote positive impacts on them.

To ensure the quality and relevance of its courses, SEARCA will incorporate proven and tested technologies and best practices produced by its researchers, fellows, alumni, and partners into appropriate training courses and training related activities, including teaching and learning materials. The University Consortium and other R&D institutions in the region would also be actively tapped to provide the needed expertise and enrich the regional dimension of training courses. Moreover, SEARCA will ensure that its training programs complement existing regional and international agricultural and rural development initiatives requiring capacity building. The Center will also pursue aggressive marketing strategies, foster more strategic alliances, and strengthen its linkages with other training providers as a means to expand its limited resources.



## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND OUTPUTS

SEARCA's short-term training program (STTP) for the next five years will aim at the following:

<b>Objective 1: To gear training activities to the most strategic participants who can provide maximum multiplier effect in their respective countries.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>1.1 Develop and implement relevant and high-quality training of trainers (ToT) programs that would lead participants to initiate action projects in their respective countries along the Center's focal concerns on natural resource management and rural growth promotion.</p> <p>1.2. Translate proven and tested technologies and best practices produced by SEARCA's researchers, fellows, alumni, and partner institutions into appropriate training courses and training related activities, including teaching and learning materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant and high-quality training courses along five major areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. better understanding of country-specific and local characteristics and determinants of food insecurity and poverty</li> <li>b. effective use of past and present development programs and projects, institutional support, service delivery, and policy interventions to achieve maximum impact,</li> <li>c. sustainable management and equitable use of natural resources;</li> <li>d. building and strengthening of partnerships among government, civil society, and private sector; and</li> <li>e. maximizing use of information and communication technologies as decision-support system for development planning and policy making.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2: To ensure client satisfaction and quality of services and products.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>2.1. Identify training needs of SEAMEO member countries along SEARCA's priority thrusts and develop courses based on common needs.</p> <p>2.2. Employ innovative, appropriate, and more client-friendly training delivery approaches, optimizing the use of information and communication technologies in all training phases.</p> <p>2.3. Develop and disseminate tested learning materials based on training outcomes.</p> <p>2.4. Conduct post-training activities to measure training impact, ensure continuous improvements of training operations and processes, and generate new programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant, technology-based, and client-friendly training materials</li> <li>• Accelerated multiplier effect of training programs in the region and increased number of training alumni</li> <li>• Innovative and enhanced quality customer service in training delivery</li> </ul>

**Objective 3: To ensure the financial viability of the program.**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>3.1. Foster more strategic alliances and strengthen linkages with other relevant training providers within and outside the region.</p> <p>3.2. Tap and collaborate with reputable private agricultural companies for sponsorship of training courses in areas of mutual benefit to them and the Center.</p> <p>3.3. Embark on an extensive marketing of training courses to generate external funding support and/or be able to operate on fee basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced cooperation and linkages among relevant development organizations and communities within and outside the Southeast Asian region on agricultural and rural development concerns.</li><li>• Mutually beneficial partnerships with funding agencies.</li><li>• Relevant, sustainable, and financially viable training programs.</li></ul>

## C. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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SEARCA's Research and Development Department (RDD) will continue to promote, undertake, and coordinate research programs and projects relevant to the needs and problems of Southeast Asia. These efforts remain relevant and fundamental to achieving food security and sustaining agricultural development and poverty reduction in the region. Moreover, SEARCA's research programs must be able to provide empirical bases to guide policy directions and decisions. The Center's priorities for the next five years will be the pursuit of research and development programs that aim to provide better alternatives in increasing agricultural productivity and rural growth while at the same time addressing major environmental concerns. Sustainable land use and water resource management, and biodiversity conservation will be important areas of emphasis in efforts toward natural resource conservation. Moreover, with the recognition of the increasing competition brought about by globalization, policies and support systems, and institutional development will be focal concerns as well.



The Center believes that attention to gender issues and perspectives will increase the equity and effectiveness of its R&D programs, and thus will continue to ensure that such are integrated into the various research projects and activities. The Center also considers it important to be able to pursue policy articulation to improve the quality of policies and decisions on issues that affect agricultural and rural development.

### PRIORITIES

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Agricultural production enhancement will not lead to agricultural development unless an outward looking orientation that links product to market and adds value to produce is adopted. Only then will growth in the rural economy be realized; one that will emancipate farmers from poverty and enable them to contribute to the process of development.

The foregoing, however, needs to be pursued within the context of Southeast Asia's dwindling natural resource bases and fast globalizing economies. Amidst these challenges, projects and activities aimed at addressing common needs and harnessing comparative strengths of countries and institutions in the region will be prioritized.

To do so would require doing research geared toward analyzing impacts of previous development efforts/thrusts and policy gaps in support of continuing initiatives on agricultural development, food security, and poverty reduction. Hence, the Research and Development Department will work within the twin thrusts of natural resource management and rural growth promotion. Not only will the RDD conduct appropriate and relevant research along these focal thrusts, but it will take an active role in helping shape agricultural research and policy directions in the region. R&D will actively promote knowledge management as a cross-cutting concern, as it recognizes the need to disseminate SEARCA's research results through publications and other means.



## A. Natural Resource Management

The ability of agriculture to sustainably address the twin goals of food security and poverty reduction largely depends on the integrity of the natural resource base. Unsustainable management could easily disrupt the interrelated and interdependent relationship of agricultural and natural resource productivity.



### 1. Sustainable Land Use and Water Management

Land and water are base resources upon which agricultural productivity largely depends. Research would have to focus on the development or enhancement of appropriate approaches to sustainable land use and water management.

### 2. Biodiversity Conservation

A large part of the Southeast Asian region is recognized as a biodiversity hotspot. The discovery and utilization of the vast potential of its natural resources are exceeded by the rate of its destruction. Biodiversity conservation has to go hand in hand with sustainable agriculture. It is therefore necessary that issues and concerns regarding the conservation and proper management of biodiversity be addressed immediately.

## B. Rural Growth Promotion

Rural areas account for the large majority (typically about two-thirds) of the poor in each of the developing countries in the region. Rural growth is the key to poverty reduction in these countries.



There is a need to address the sources of rural stagnation and stimulate productivity and growth for the rural economy to be more integrated in the national economy. The issues have become more complex with globalization. The situation therefore calls for a multi-dimensional approach that would strengthen policies and institutions that deal with rural poverty, facilitate and enhance access to social and economic infrastructure, ensure effective governance, and ensure the participation and empowerment of the rural sector.

### 1. Policies and Support Systems

Differences in access to resources – natural, social, and economic – have also resulted in differences in the rate and level of economic growth. Inherent to stimulation of productivity and income growth would be ensuring the availability or delivery of support services. To facilitate agricultural growth and competitiveness, technology, infrastructure and financial support services have to be made available.

### 2. Institutions and Governance

Institutions dealing with rural poverty have to be strengthened to address issues and opportunities that could stimulate productivity growth. The citizenry has to be considered a partner in development. The people's capacity has to be strengthened for them to become meaningful players in matters that affect the quality of their lives.

## Objectives, Strategies, and Outputs

<b>Objective 1: To address regional poverty and food security issues and concerns.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>1.1 Conduct appropriate and relevant agricultural and rural development (ARD) research on natural resource management particularly sustainable land use and water resource management) and rural growth promotion (focusing on policies and support systems as well as institutional development).</p> <p>1.2 Take leadership role in ARD toward articulating policy directions and providing policy inputs to policy and regulatory framework development, comparative studies, and policy-enhancement proposals.</p> <p>1.3 Prepare and actively market high-quality proposals on the thrusts and priority topics of the Center to generate external funding support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least <b>5</b> research proposals developed and submitted, and at least <b>2</b> approved and funded per year.</li> <li>• Well-managed and coordinated R&amp;D projects</li> <li>• New/renewed partnerships with institutions</li> <li>• Resources generated</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2: To take an active role in shaping agricultural research and policy directions of the region.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>2.1 Take the lead on emerging issues and concerns on ARD.</p> <p>2.2 Organize fora for exchange of ideas on agricultural development and other venues where the region's stakeholders can discuss pressing issues and concerns on ARD</p> <p>2.3 Build/Enhance partnerships and promote regional collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalization of various modalities of collaborative endeavor</li> <li>• Relevant conferences, seminars, and similar fora</li> <li>• New/Revitalized networks and linkages</li> </ul>

**Objective 3: To ensure effective and efficient program management and interdepartmental collaboration.**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
3.1 Functional integration with Graduate Scholarship Department, Training Department, and Consulting Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Well-managed and coordinated collaborative undertakings</li><li>• Thesis grant component in new R&amp;D projects</li><li>• Enrichment programs for scholars</li><li>• International training programs in support of research capacity development</li><li>• Improved capacity on e-Learning</li></ul>

## D. KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION AND EXCHANGE



Knowledge is SEARCA's primary resource and commodity. It is information that is relevant, actionable, based on experience, and is put to work and applied, which eventually makes a difference.

The challenge to the Center now is to pioneer in two areas: (a) explore the applications of information and communication technology (ICT) on natural resource management and rural growth promotion; and (b) explore the regional R&D applications of ICT. Hence, the Center can break new ground in terms of content and coverage, as well as the nuances in mechanics attendant to the above sectors. This is the mission of the Knowledge Management Unit.

### PRIORITIES

The value of research is realized when its results are utilized by the target clientele. Thus, transforming and disseminating knowledge and information from research results is vital in human resource development. Toward this end, SEARCA will make information and knowledge readily available and accessible to end-users in the region by establishing information networks, developing and disseminating databases, producing and promoting high-quality publications, conducting relevant training courses/seminars/fora/conferences, and maintaining SEARCA's strong Internet presence.



Knowledge dissemination efforts shall be enabled by a systematic and efficient information system containing research information and results, which shall be accessible through the Internet. Using stored data, other information products can be packaged/designed according to the target clientele.



Various venues where the region's stakeholders can discuss pressing and timely issues and concerns on ARD will be organized by SEARCA. Updated primers on ARD in the SEAMEO member countries will be complementary initiatives. Areas for collaborative action, in research or capacity building modes (training, curriculum development, scholarship provision), are the expected outputs of these initiatives.

**OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND OUTPUTS**

<b>Objective 1: To promote diffusion of knowledge on key agricultural and rural development issues.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>1.1 Harness information and communication technology (ICT) to process and disseminate knowledge.</p> <p>1.2 Disseminate SEARCA's research results to the global research community by:</p> <p>1.3 Publishing a semi-annual refereed journal and a discussion paper series to stimulate a more active discussion of the range of issues surrounding agricultural and rural development.</p> <p>1.4. Producing policy research reports, policy notes, and policy briefs as additional outlets for results of the Center's policy researches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational technology and country profile databases</li> <li>• Functional information networks</li> <li>• High-quality and relevant reference/information materials:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annually, <b>2</b> journal issues, <b>3</b> discussion paper series, <b>3</b> monographs, <b>2</b> books, research reports, and policy notes and briefs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2: To expand the reach of the Center's readership.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>2.1 Make the journal, paper series, policy outputs, and all R&amp;D newsletters available in print and electronic forms (via Internet).</p> <p>2.2 Enter into joint-publishing arrangements with university presses.</p> <p>2.3 Explore new marketing modalities.</p> <p>2.4 Forge formal institutional exchanges with different university libraries and journal publishers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications in print and electronic format</li> <li>• Joint-publishing arrangements with university presses</li> <li>• New marketing modalities</li> <li>• Strengthened networks and linkages</li> <li>• Improved circulation of Center publications</li> <li>• Updated and informative website</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 3: Stimulate discussions on pressing issues and concerns on agricultural and rural development (ARD)</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>3.1 Regularly conduct the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) and provide other venues where the region's stakeholders can discuss pressing issues and concerns on ARD (e.g. electronic media and face-to-face discussions, i.e., workshops, fora, conferences, seminars, etc.)</p> <p>3.2 Maintain an agricultural development situationer on the ASEAN member countries for easy access of users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADSS conducted weekly</li> <li>• Various fora to bring ideas together</li> <li>• Vibrant exchange that could fuel new research or policy directions</li> <li>• Regularly updated primer on agriculture and development for each 10 member country</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 4: To facilitate knowledge sharing through knowledge networks and with the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs).</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<p>4.1 Coordinate knowledge/information networks that will provide venues for expert discussion on research results, and important issues and concerns in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia</p> <p>4.2 Develop and maintain an information system that is responsive to the needs of agricultural and rural development researchers and practitioners</p> <p>4.3 Enhance capabilities of information professionals to develop information and knowledge management systems</p> <p>4.4 Enhance the capabilities of information users to access the resources of knowledge networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information networks and on-line discussion venues</li> <li>• User friendly information system</li> <li>• ICT training concepts developed (in cooperation with Training Department)</li> <li>• Trained users of databases and knowledge networks</li> </ul>

## ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

To meet the serious challenges of the future, both in the short- and long term, SEARCA will gear up toward a high level of performance in its operations and in providing services to its clients. To achieve this, the Center will continue to undertake improvements in management systems, work processes, and service delivery in order to attain greater levels of results from the resources received. It shall likewise endeavor to make the organization highly skilled, accountable, functionally integrated, and results-oriented.

In a funding environment so much more difficult than in the past years, there is a greater urgency not only to deploy financial resources with maximum effectiveness, but more importantly, to raise funds with greater determination and resourcefulness, and to manage such with great prudence.

### OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND OUTPUTS

<b>Objective 1:</b> To adopt management and human resource systems that will ensure the Center's ability to build a successful and high-performance organization.	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
1.1 Develop and implement effective human resource management systems that can attract and retain high-quality staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-performing workforce that can meet new and expanded responsibilities</li> <li>• Performance aligned with organizational goals, commitments, and priorities</li> <li>• A compensation and incentive system that is performance-oriented</li> <li>• A work culture that inspires teamwork and innovation and encourages professional growth</li> </ul>
1.2 Provide a source of consistent, reliable, accurate, and secure information to management and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An information systems and technology framework that supports integration across functional areas</li> </ul>
1.3 Increase the focus on accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated budget and performance information</li> <li>• Resource allocation that is linked to performance</li> <li>• Strengthened property accountability</li> </ul>
1.4 Enhance financial management systems and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved financial management system and processes that render timely and accurate financial information and eliminate duplicative procedures</li> </ul>
1.5 Maintain a strong client focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient and timely services</li> <li>• Well-maintained facilities</li> <li>• Enhanced client satisfaction</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2: To ensure sound financial performance and a stable financial resource base.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
2.1 Maximize the earnings of SEARCA's funds through sound investment procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum returns on SEARCA's investments</li> </ul>
2.2. Implement a sound marketing strategy and competitive pricing scheme for SEARCA's products, services, and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• True cost of services identified</li> <li>• Increased patronage of SEARCA's products, services, and facilities</li> <li>• Increased income from the use of facilities and services and product sales</li> </ul>
2.3 Reduce operating costs and achieve economic efficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential waste, fraud, and abuse of financial and material resources quickly identified and controlled</li> <li>• Rational equipment and facilities acquisition, maintenance, and disposal program in place</li> </ul>
2.4 Continuously scan for funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained commitment from existing donors</li> <li>• Commitments from new donors obtained</li> </ul>
2.5 Harness the potential of consulting services as a major fund generator for SEARCA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased income from consulting services projects</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 3: To enhance public awareness of SEARCA's activities and accomplishments.</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
3.1 Develop and promote effective corporate publications and PR materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality corporate publications and PR materials</li> </ul>
3.2 Enhance working relationships with media partners to disseminate relevant information to key audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good public image</li> </ul>

**CORE PERSONNEL STRENGTH (As of 1 October 2003)**

POSITION	No. of Authorized Positions
<b>Directorate</b>	
Director	1
Deputy Director	2
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Program Staff</b>	
Head, Graduate Scholarship Department	1
Head, Training Department	1
Head, Research and Dev't Department	1
Head, Knowledge Management Unit	1
Manager, Consulting Services Department	1
Librarian/Documentation Specialist	1
Graduate Scholarship Specialist	2
Info & Comm Specialist/Editor	1
Project Development Specialist	5
Project Development Associate	1
Training Associate	1
Training Specialist	1
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Administration Staff</b>	
Head, Accounting Unit	1
Head, Facilities Management Unit	1
Head, General Services Unit	1
Head, Human Resources Management Unit	1
Head, Internal Audit Unit	1
Head, Management Services Unit	1
Head, Treasury Services Unit	1

POSITION	No. of Authorized Positions
Accounting Assistant	1
Administrative Assistant	2
Assistant Cashier	1
Auditor	1
Bookkeeper	2
Carpenter/Plumber	2
Dispatcher	1
Electrician/AC Technician	2
Executive Assistant	3
Financial Specialist	1
H & F Coordinator	1
HR Specialist	1
Information Systems Specialist	2
Lodging Supervisor	1
Management Specialist	1
Mechanic-Driver	1
Messenger-Clerk	1
MIS Assistant	1
Payroll Assistant	1
Print Technician-Illustrator	1
Production Assistant/Library Aide	1
Property and Supply Assistant	1
Public Relations Specialist	1
Purchaser	1
Purchasing Clerk	1
Secretary	1
Supervisor - G & B	1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>41</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>
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*Note: As a result of SEARCA's reorganization, 61 core staff positions have been identified, of which 57 are to be filled by 1 October 2003.*