



SEAMEO SEARCA

ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2022/2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture

www.searca.org

Executive Summary

SEAMEO SEARCA remained dedicated to promoting agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia during the third year of our Eleventh Five-Year Plan focused on **Accelerating Transformation Through Agricultural Innovation (ATTAIN)**.

SEAMEO SEARCA's work is organized around three core programs, namely, **Education and Collective Learning, Research and Thought Leadership, and Emerging Innovation for Growth**, which targeted seven priority areas aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To achieve its mission to elevate the quality of life of agricultural families through sustainable and resilient livelihoods and access to modern networks and markets, SEAMEO SEARCA worked on five key fronts.

ATTAIN Outcome 1: Stakeholders embodying mindset transitions

SEAMEO SEARCA prioritized providing **scholarships and training** to cultivate leaders, researchers, educators, change agents, and farmers. These scholarships were funded collaboratively by SEAMEO SEARCA and partner institutions. SEAMEO SEARCA provided support and opportunities for scholars and faculty, assisting them in disseminating research findings and participating in international mobility programs. The Center also established the **Graduate-On-Time program** offering customized trainings, **GSID Conversations**, seminars, conferences, testimonials, and social activities to enhance scholars' competence, development, and well-being while recognizing their academic milestones and research contributions.

SEAMEO SEARCA remains committed to empowering institutions and fostering innovation through its **institutional development assistance (IDA)** program. Notably, we assisted Cambodia's Royal University of Agriculture in establishing an Internal Quality Assurance system and extended IDA benefits to **State Universities and Colleges Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines, Inc. (SUC ACAP)** members.

Furthermore, SEAMEO SEARCA sustained its engagement in multicountry higher education networks, foremost of which is the **Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC)** and **Agrinatura**, the European Alliance on Knowledge for Development.

Moreover, SEAMEO SEARCA actively promoted **youth engagement in agriculture** through activities that fostered sharing, learning, and innovation design. The Center launched the **SEARCA Hub for Agricultural and Rural Innovation for the Next Generation (SHARING)**, supported robot olympiads, and organized a Southeast Asian Youth Fest and agri-robotics learning events for family farm schools. The Center also piloted the **SEARCA Youth in Agri Talk Show**.

190

SEARCA
SCHOLARSHIPS
MANAGED

39

NEW
SCHOLARS

14

JOINT
SCHOLARSHIPS
PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTED

44

REGIONAL AND
NATIONAL LEARNING
EVENTS CONDUCTED

2

SEARCA AGRICULTURE
AND DEVELOPMENT
SEMINAR SERIES
(ADSS)

3

SEARCA ONLINE
LEARNING
AND VIRTUAL
ENGAGEMENT
(SOLVE) WEBINARS
HELD

ATTAIN Outcome 2: Enabling policies and regulatory frameworks supporting ARD at the local, national, regional, and international levels

SEAMEO SEARCA directs its finite resources towards conducting research that contributes to the establishment of enabling policies and regulatory frameworks that provide the necessary structure, guidance, and support for the agricultural sector to thrive sustainably, contribute to economic growth, ensure food security, build resilience, and promote international cooperation in addressing shared challenges. SEAMEO SEARCA's **Research for Development (R4D)** projects evaluated a program on farm school establishment, assessed a technology business incubation program, created information materials on biotech contributions to farmers' success, enhanced biotechnology links through scientific knowledge, and is now benchmarking agricultural research management systems. The Center **completed two regional projects that support ASEAN** focused on addressing the challenges of ensuring food security and inclusiveness while utilizing digital technologies to improve the efficiency and resilience of the food supply chain. On the other hand, its **action researches gained ground** in developing value-added calamansi products, creating a coconut industry roadmap in Quezon Province, scaling up/out the School-plus-Home Gardens Project, and investigating households' food security coping strategies during COVID-19 in Indonesia and the Philippines. The Center's efforts also included **refining digital research platforms**, foremost of which is the **Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Knowledge Platform**, and conducting research activities for farmer-centric policy development and support family farming.

ATTAIN Outcome 3: Wider access to innovative products and services, and business models for increased productivity and income

SEAMEO SEARCA supported agricultural technology solutions to enhance approaches at different stages of the value chain. The Center also engaged in initiatives that will help advanced innovation commercialization within academic and research institutions. SEAMEO SEARCA **Grants for Research towards Agricultural Innovative Solutions (GRAINS)** were awarded to improve supply chain management, enhance animal welfare practices, and support smallholder farmers through innovative agricultural solutions.

Moreover, SEAMEO SEARCA embarked on a **Rice Straw Biogas Hub** project, which aims to generate clean energy from waste rice straw and provide innovative technology services for rice farmers such as efficient milling and straw harvesting as well as biogas-powered drying and storage.

ATTAIN Outcome 4: Increased investment in the agriculture and rural sector

SEAMEO SEARCA enhanced its financial commitments to agriculture and food systems by allocating resources to capacity building, research, and innovation grants aimed at supporting key contributors to ARD. In FY 2022/2023, SEAMEO SEARCA's support included **scholarship grants**, **Seed Fund for Research and Training** grants, **professorial chair** grants, **travel grants** for research dissemination, and **GRAINS**.

35

UNIVERSITY
CONSORTIUM
GRANTS MANAGED

22

RESEARCH PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTED

2

GRANTS FOR
RESEARCH TOWARDS
AGRICULTURAL
INNOVATIVE
SOLUTIONS (GRAINS)
FUNDED

5

SEED FUND FOR
TRAINING AND
RESEARCH (SFRT)
GRANTED

5

PROFESSORIAL
CHAIR GRANTS
AWARDED

8

TRAVEL GRANTS
FOR RESEARCH
DISSEMINATION
PROVIDED



ATTAIN Outcome 5: Food and nutrition security from a range of choices ensuring well-being in an evolving lifestyle

Additionally, SEAMEO SEARCA prioritized initiatives that advance food and nutrition security. The **Food is Life Exemplified: Mobile App Development Competition for Planetary Health Diet (FLEXPHD)** produced apps that guide consumers in making informed food choices based on the PHD model. SEAMEO SEARCA also convened knowledge events on **School-plus-Home Gardens with Biodiversity Enhancement Enterprise (SHGBEE)** in Palawan, Philippines and **SHGBEE in the Establishment of Agricultural Technology Parks (ATPs) and Mini-ATPs in Cambodia**. Other activities on the ground are the **School Edible Landscaping for Entrepreneurship** in the Philippines and a two-country **case study on food security coping strategies during the pandemic**.

SOLID RESOURCE BASE

SEAMEO SEARCA recognizes the significance of collaboration in implementing these development solutions and placed great importance on working in partnerships. In FY 2022/2023, SEAMEO SEARCA signed **38 new formal agreements with 36 partners** in the academe (11), industry (6), government (8), civil society (11), and international community (2).

To foster knowledge exchange and expertise sharing, SEAMEO SEARCA actively participated in **21 conferences, roundtables, workshops, technical meetings** as well as **produced 43 new publications** to disseminate research findings.

SEAMEO SEARCA's **solid financial standing**, achieved through prudent fiscal management and robust cash flow, was complemented by the **exceptional commitment and expertise of its staff, consultants, and Senior Fellows**.

38

NEW AGREEMENTS
SIGNED WITH 36
PARTNERS

43

PUBLICATIONS
PRODUCED

21

CONFERENCES,
WORKSHOPS, AND
KNOWLEDGE EVENTS
CONVENED

97

STAFF

179

CONSULTANTS

19

SENIOR FELLOWS