



# UNITED KINGDOM AND SEARCA

SEARCA's headquarters was constructed with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and the Government of the Philippines.



Established in 1966, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) is one of the 26 specialist institutions of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), a treaty organization that promotes regional cooperation in education, science, and culture.

The SEAMEO member countries are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. The associate member countries of SEAMEO are Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Morocco, the Netherlands, Morocco, New Zealand, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

SEARCA's objectives are to:

1. Provide high-quality graduate education and training in agriculture;
2. Promote, undertake, and coordinate research addressing the development needs and problems in agriculture of the region; and
3. Disseminate the findings of agricultural research and experimentation.

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#### **SEAMEO SEARCA**

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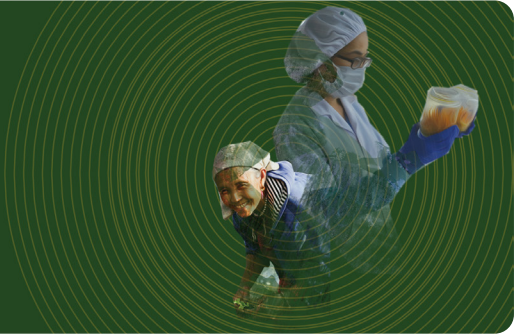


## Our Vision

A leading enabler and champion of excellence in agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia

## Our Mission

To elevate the quality of life of agricultural families through sustainable livelihoods and access to modern networks and innovative markets



## Our Strategic Objectives

- Access new and innovative financial services
- Adopt new, sustainable, and resilient production technologies and systems
- Integrate with modern postharvest and logistics system
- Gain access to and operate in modern networks and markets





supports the  
**UN Sustainable Development Goals**



## Our Strategic Intent

SEARCA, in the next five years, commits to BETTER, BIGGER, and SMARTER outcomes and impact on the agriculture industry and its stakeholders, most especially the larger proportion of resource-poor farmers, by delivering better services through more context-relevant and valuable services to even more beneficiaries in more effective and efficient ways.

Alongside other global, regional, and national organizations, SEARCA aligns its direction towards contributing to the achievement of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address global challenges to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. SEARCA commits to contribute and allocate resources for the achievement of five SDGs which directly align with its mandate and focus, with an emphasis on creating partnerships (SDG17). Moreover, SEARCA also touches three other SDGs as it tries to achieve the five.

## EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING

### ■ GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since 1968, SEARCA has been awarding scholarships for graduate study in agriculture and related fields to Southeast Asians who are envisaged to assume leadership roles in their respective countries and influence the directions of agricultural and rural development in the region. To date, SEARCA has awarded a total of **1,892 master's and PhD scholarships** to Southeast Asians, **618** of which were awarded under joint scholarship projects. SEARCA scholarships are tenable at selected universities in the region as well as in higher education institutions with institutional arrangements with SEARCA.

#### **Scholars at the Royal Agricultural College**

Two Filipino SEARCA scholars earned their MS in Business Management in the Agricultural and Food Industries at the Royal Agricultural College (now known as Royal Agricultural University) in Gloucestershire, United Kingdom (UK). The scholars are Ms. Pia Ang and Mr. Jerome D. Bunyi, both professional staff of the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), Philippines. Their scholarship was funded by DA-BAR and administered by SEARCA.



#### **Asian-European MS in Food Science and Technology**

SEARCA belonged to a consortium that organized the Asian-European MS in Food Science and Technology from 2001 to 2005. The first run (2001-2002) of the 19-month intensive MS program was centralized at SEARCA with partners from France, Malaysia, and Thailand.



**UNIVERSITY  
of  
GREENWICH**

The University of Greenwich became a partner in the second run (2003-2005), along with Wageningen University, Netherlands. The second offering was hosted by Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand with support from the European Commission under the Asia-Link Program. All members of the consortium worked collaboratively in developing course content as well as the selected of students and teaching staff.

## ■ TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Jeya Kathirithamby-Wells of Cambridge University served as a resource person in a SEARCA-led workshop under the project titled **Institutional Context of Biodiversity Conservation in Southeast Asia: Trans-national, Cross-sectoral, and Interdisciplinary Approach**, which aimed to enhance regional capacity in designing and implementing community-based resource management projects as strategies for achieving sustainable development in the coastal areas of Southeast Asia. Dr. Kathirithamby-Wells presented a paper titled “The Environmental Implications of Plantation Agriculture in Peninsular Malaysia.”

In August 2013, Mr. Mark Lynas, author, environmental campaigner, and Visiting Research Associate at the School of Geography and the Environment, Oxford University, gave a seminar titled *Meeting the Challenges of Food Security with Biotechnology* at the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS).

In May 2014, Mr. Graham Brookes, Director of PG Economics, a UK company specializing in plant biotechnology and agriculture systems management, was one of the speakers at the **Regional Workshop for Media Practitioners** themed “Communicating Biotechnology for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture” organized by SEARCA and partners in Hanoi, Vietnam. Mr. Brookes presented the findings of a study on the economic and environmental benefits of biotech crops, particularly insect-resistant and herbicide-tolerant technologies, both of which contributed to increasing world production in all four major biotech crops (i.e., soybean, corn, cotton, canola).





## EMERGING INNOVATION FOR GROWTH



### ► RICE STRAW BIOGAS HUB

In 2022, UK-registered startup Straw Innovations, Ltd. started collaborating with SEARCA, the UK SME Koolmill and UK academic partner Aston University on a three-year project called **Rice Straw Biogas Hub** to make clean energy accessible to remote, under-served rural communities. Funded by Innovate UK under the United Kingdom Research and Innovation organization, the project demonstrates efficient removal of waste rice straw from farmers' fields and conversion into ecofriendly, commercially viable products, focusing on biogas.

The hub will introduce a package of rice technologies from efficient grain/straw harvesting to biogas-powered drying and storage as well as efficient milling. The intervention is envisaged to enable farmers to triple their incomes while protecting the environment. Through an affordable, value-adding commercial business model, farmers will avoid buying and maintaining expensive equipment.

Straw Innovations is lead the efforts of scaling up the rice harvesting system that it has developed for over five years and establishing a rice drying service through combustion of biogas from rice straw. The project team will also test a biogas engine for combined-heat-and-pumping.

Meanwhile, Koolmill will showcase its energy-efficient rice milling technology, packaged in a pay-per-use business model. Aston University will conduct surveys in Laguna and major rice-growing areas across the Philippines to assess attitudes towards and socio-economic impacts of the Rice Straw Biogas Hub and proposed business models.

SEARCA, through its Emerging Innovation for Growth Department, is involved in greenhouse gas analyses quantifying the emissions saved throughout the system. Results will be used as a basis for potential carbon-trading revenue in the future. SEARCA will also lead the work package on creating an enabling environment. This involves technical training in anaerobic digestion for stakeholders, and analyzing policies, gaps and market failures to help governments develop supportive policies across Southeast Asia.

## ■ PAST RESEARCH PROJECTS

### ► BROWN PLANTHOPPER RESEARCH

This project was launched in 1979 following the signing of a memorandum of agreement between SEARCA and the Center for Overseas Pest Research (COPR) of the UK Ministry of Overseas Development. SEARCA and COPR implemented the project in collaboration with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Natural Resources Research and Development PCARR, (now known as Philippine Council for Agriculture and Natural Resources Research and Development or PCAARRD).

COPR, through the British Council in Manila, funded the project while SEARCA provided the technical expertise and the needed administrative support services. SEARCA also provided office facilities for the project and liaised with partner organizations, including IRRI, that provided technical assistance to the project. COPR also sent Dr. T.J. Perfect and Dr. Anthea Cook to supervise the project.



Director P.T. Haskell (left) of the Centre for Overseas Pest Research in England and Dr. J.D. Drilon, former SEARCA Director, signed the memorandum of agreement binding the two entities in the conduct of joint research and training projects to bolster pest control activities in developing countries in Asia. Witnesses in the signing are R. F. Chapman of COPR (left) and Dr. Gil F. Saguiguit, former SEARCA Deputy Director.

This three-year project conducted ecological studies on the brown planthopper which became a rice pest in tropical Asia at the time. Specifically, the study provided data for a better understanding of the nature of the pest which led to effective pest control methods. The pilot site of the study was a two-hectare rice field in Liliw, Laguna, Philippines.



## ► AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT

As part of this project, SEARCA collaborated with the British Agricultural Training Board (BATB) in conducting a briefing for the Association of Colleges of Agriculture in the Philippines (ACAP) in September 1988. Resource speakers at the seminar were Mr. Michael Bowen, Marketing Manager, and Dr. Terry Head, Veterinary Training Consultant, both of BATB. They provided an overview about BATB and expounded on ways by which they could assist in conducting training courses in other countries in the region. The training courses were extended to other countries including Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

SEARCA's Agribusiness Project focused on providing education and training opportunities to address the agribusiness problems common to countries in the region.

## ► AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION BANK FOR ASIA

In 1973, SEARCA established the **Agricultural Information Bank for Asia (AIBA)** which aimed to serve as a regional documentation center that will meet the need for improved information services in the field of agriculture and allied disciplines. It also served as the regional coordinating center for the Agricultural Information Network-Southeast Asia (AgInfoNet-SEA), which was composed of national centers in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

The British Council funded the AIBA project along with other international organizations such as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Asia Foundation.

In 1978-1980, a SEARCA-British Council arrangement enabled four SEARCA staff to undertake training to prepare them for the long-range computerization project of AIBA.

## ► POST-PRODUCTION RESEARCH APPLICATION PROJECT

This three-year regional project was funded by IDRC to explore systematic procedures and promote the application of post-production research results and innovative processing and marketing enterprises in rural communities in Southeast Asian countries.

In its last year, the project focused its activities on pilot commercial enterprise validation and the documentation of in-country experiences of the project, including development of commercialization protocols, terminal reports, and in-country cases. One of these activities was a business plan for the commercial utilization of groundnut postharvest technologies for Nge An province in North Vietnam. This was done through the farming systems program of the Vietnamese government in cooperation with the British government.

## ► REGOVERNING MARKETS: SECURING SMALL PRODUCER PARTICIPATION IN RESTRUCTURED NATIONAL AND REGIONAL AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

SEARCA implemented this project in 2004 in partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development of the UK.

The project analyzed the growing processing and retail sectors of national and regional agri-food systems and their impacts on and implications for rural livelihoods and communities. It covered the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Aside from the integrated project report, findings of the project were discussed in a paper titled *Market Access for Small Producers in a Supermarket-dominated Agrifood System* presented at the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) in September 2004.

## ■ VISITING SCIENTISTS PROGRAM

- Mr. Kiern Patrick Broadbent, consultant of SEARCA's AIBA project and a senior staff member of the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Wolfson College, University of Oxford, England, 1977-1978.
- Dr. T.J. Perfect and Dr. Athena Cook, both of the COPR, England, served as Visiting Scientists to supervise the three-year COPR-SEARCA **Brown Planthopper Research Project** effective March 1979 with financial support from the British Government and PCARR.

## LINKAGES

In 1996-1997, SEARCA signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne International Center for Sustainable Agriculture (NICSA) in the UK. The University also expressed their interest to join the SEARCA-initiated **Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC)**.

In 2002, SEARCA signed a MOA with Self-Help Ideas and Plans-United Kingdom (SHIP-UK) to collaborate on joint projects, particularly on community networking research and business/resource operation.



