

BRIA to Leverage and Optimize Synergies with Sister Projects



Countries in Southeast Asia contribute significantly to world food security. GIZ implements a range of projects dealing with agriculture. To capitalize on operational synergies, BRIA will work together with its two sister projects, ASEAN SAS and RIICE, to strengthen the regional rice sector and reduce poverty.

ASEAN SAS (Sustainable Agrifood Systems) ensures long-term food security in ASEAN and improves the livelihoods of farmers, under the umbrella of the ASEAN-German Programme on Response to Climate Change in Agriculture and Forestry (GAP-CC) commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, according to Dr. Yotsawin Kukeawkasem, ASEAN SAS Component Leader for Market Linkages.

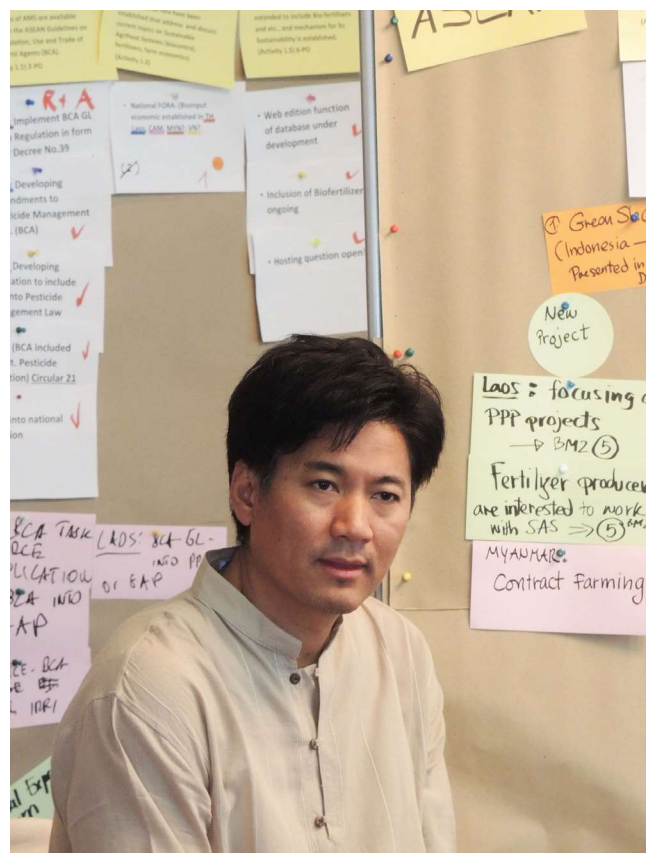
Food security requires sustainable production systems that supply safe, healthy and affordable food to meet people's increasing demand while protecting natural resources. ASEAN SAS focuses on three areas:

- Develop a policy framework for a sustainable agrifood sector.
- Promote the use of sustainable inputs and crop management practices. For example, the project promotes the application of Biological Control Agents (BCA) as part of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies and soil and nutrient management to improve crop productivity.
- Promote sustainable value chains in collaboration with the private sector.

Dr. Yotsawin also offers advisory support on value chains and market linkages to BRIA. He believes bringing in more private partners should benefit smallholder farmers under the BRIA project. Last year, BRIA signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Olam International and Deutsche Bank (DB). Olam International is a global leader in supply chain management of agricultural products and food ingredients and should considerably contribute to a more competitive rice sector, enhanced market linkages and an improved rice value chain. John Deere, the world's largest agricultural machinery company, should help raise rice production and productivity while BRIA can tap into the financial expertise of DB for Agricultural Value Chain Financing (AVCF). The Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) standard, which BRIA and Olam support, will set sustainable environmentally-friendly standards for rice production with traceability.

The livelihood of smallholder farmers living in rural areas depends heavily on agriculture and natural resources and farmers face different types of risk in each day. Agricultural risk management is one of Dr. Yotsawin's areas of expertise. The major sources of agricultural risk can be broadly categorized as follows:

- Production risk that may be associated with weather, pests, diseases, technology, farm management, genetics, equipment, factor inputs which impact production quantity and quality
- Price/market risk caused by changes in the prices of agricultural inputs and outputs
- Financial risk or the method to acquire and finance capital and a farmer's ability to pay financial obligations
- Institutional risk resulting from changes in governmental and legal policies and standards
- Personal risk due to human capacity and capabilities of farmers and the willingness of the young generation to continue the farming business



Dr. Yotsawin explains that farmers may reduce agricultural risks through various measures such as diversification, crop insurance, contract farming, adopting new technologies, forming farmer groups or cooperatives, compliance with international standards, etc.

Crop insurance not only protects against losses but also offers the opportunity for more consistent gains. In this regard, BRIA will work with RIICE (Remote sensing-based Information and Insurance for Crops in Emerging economies) to enhance farmers' understanding of crop insurance and particularly to encourage their participation in the "area yield index insurance pilot," which RIICE will implement in Suphanburi and Ubon Ratchathani Provinces, two BRIA project sites in Thailand to better manage production risks. The details of this pilot programme will be reported in the March issue of the BRIA newsletter.

Article contributed by Kamol T.