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Engaging ASEAN Youth on Responsible Agriculture Investments

Monograph on the United Nations Committee on World Food Security’s Principles of Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI) and the ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (AGRAI)

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FOREWORD

The steadily increasing urbanized world population, incessantly evolving agrotechnologies, and dramatically changing food production and consumption patterns, among others, continue to pose risks to every human’s right to food security. Thus, significant work and support from various actors are needed to expand responsible investment in agriculture and food systems.

The Committee on World Food Security, through a multi-stakeholder process, sanctioned the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI), which includes 10 principles that apply to all types and sizes of agricultural investment at all stages of the value chain. It serves as an instrument to address and act on the global environmental, economic, and, social issues related to our food systems.

AsiaDHRRRA, in its work of building cooperation and strengthening mechanisms towards the attainment of the UN SDG and UN Decade of Family Farming agenda, partners with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in localizing its “Supporting Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems” umbrella program in Southeast Asia. This program aims at increasing awareness and joint actions on RAI at different levels, including enhancing enabling environments, strengthening capacities of stakeholders, and, improving the monitoring and assessment of trends and impacts on this agenda.

This monograph capsulizes the results of initial assessments on RAI capacities at Mekong Sub-Region.. It highlights the importance of engaging and empowering youth in agriculture, building awareness of RAI at the global, regional, and national levels, and, strengthening networks and creating platforms for advocacy action. This document hopes to serve as reference for designing frameworks and plans for concrete action in pursuing the quest towards sustainable agriculture and rural development.

We wish to express our thanks to the UN FAO, to Michael Riggs, FAO Team Leader of Responsible Agricultural Investment and his team, for their trust in partnering with us for this initiative; to our DHARRA members, specifically, CamboDHARRA, LaoDHARRA, MyanDHARRA, PhilDHARRA, ThaiDHARRA, and VietDHARRA in their commitment in promoting RAI in their respective countries. Kudos to our Capacity Building Team led by Cezar Belangel and Arlynn Contreras, and, to Ernie Lim (lead writer), Mags Catindig, Jenny de Guzman, and, Jet Hermida, for putting-up this publication together.

Marlene Ramirez
AsiaDHARRA Secretary General

I. INTRODUCTION

The food crisis in 2007-2008 triggered a global race among large agribusiness corporations for the acquisition and control of large tracts of agricultural lands in developing countries in Africa and Asia. Coinciding with growing global demand for food, mainly due to rapid population growth, and the dominance of the growth paradigm that prescribes the infusion of foreign direct investments (FDIs) to fuel the economic growth, developing countries were also pushed into competition with each other for attracting FDIs that led to these countries providing too much incentives. Although the entry of FDIs leads to economic growth and employment, it also creates significant negative social, economic and environmental impacts such as food insecurity (as FDIs in agriculture tend to focus on monocrops and industrial/cash crops), the environmental degradation (due to adoption of unsustainable agricultural practices and technologies), exploitation of labor and occupational health and safety issues, “land grabbing” or large-scale acquisition of agriculture lands, displacement and loss of access to land and other natural resources for local and indigenous communities, destruction of cultural heritage, and even human rights violations.

As such practices became more rampant, a global clamor from people’s and development organizations for the curtailment of such practices and arrangements. And to address the issue, the United Nation’s Committee on World Food Security developed and endorsed in 15 October 2014 the Principles of Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI). The said principles sought to increase agricultural investment and, at the same time, improve the quality of said investments. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) also developed its own Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry that (AGRAI) is adapted to the region’s context.

To promote these Principles and Guidelines for Responsible Investments in Agriculture, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched in 2017 the needs-driven Umbrella Program: “Supporting Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems” that seeks to address challenges in enhancing agricultural investment in agriculture, such as lack of awareness, governance challenges, and capacity and information gaps. Initial activities undertaken by the program include the development of learning materials, capacity development on legal frameworks and activities to empower youth.

On its part, AsiaDHARRA, in partnership with FAO, has launched a series of workshops on CFS-RAI and the AGRAI in Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Viet Nam (CLMV) in 2019. AsiaDHARRA and FAO will also be conducting within 2020 national conferences on The

Role of Youth in CFS-RAI and the AGRAI in Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Indonesia and the Philippines.

This document is intended to be used as primary reference material for the said national conferences. It discusses the context and rationale for the development and adoption of the CFS-RAI and the AGRAI, and presents the specifics of the guidelines including the nuance between the two versions. This document also covers the rationale, challenges and opportunities in capacitating and mobilizing the youth to carry-out and benefit from responsible investments in agriculture. Results of the assessment workshop, conducted by AsiaDHRRA and FAO last June 19-21, 2019 in Hanoi Viet Nam, that looked into the current capacities of the youth in the CLMV region, and the areas that need to be strengthened, for them to be able them to effectively participate and take-advantage of responsible agricultural investments are also presented.

II. RATIONALE FOR RAI

Key to eradication of poverty and hunger

Eradication of poverty and hunger are among the biggest and most urgent challenges the global community is facing. Such is the urgency that addressing poverty and hunger were identified as the first two sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With majority of the world's poor and food insecure living in the rural areas of developing countries, agriculture and rural development become key to achieving the said SDGs. In spite of agriculture's dwindling and minimal contribution to the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) – only 10% among South-East Asian nations, of an ageing farming population and increasing urbanization, a large portion of the population of developing countries still rely on the agriculture sector for their livelihood. Among South-East Asian countries, around 35% of its workforce are in agriculture. (FAO, 2019)

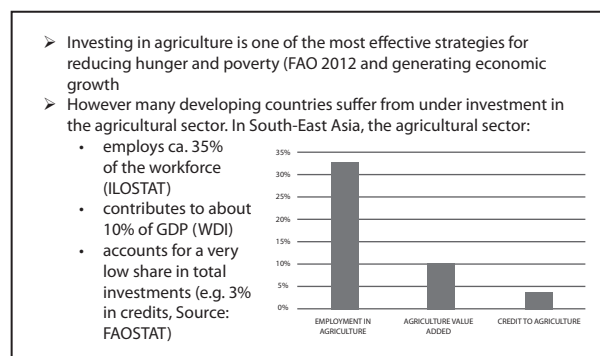
In addition to the significant number of people still relying on agriculture for food security and livelihood, the said sector remains important in terms of poverty and hunger eradication as it has proven to be an effective “engine of growth” specially at the early stages of development. With agriculture being more labor intensive than other nonagricultural industries, growth in the said sector leads to “higher employment and incomes, better nutrition and faster poverty reduction, and prevent distress migration from rural areas into urban unemployment.” (Headey, 2010)

Aside from agriculture's impact on poverty reduction and food security, gains and new investment in the

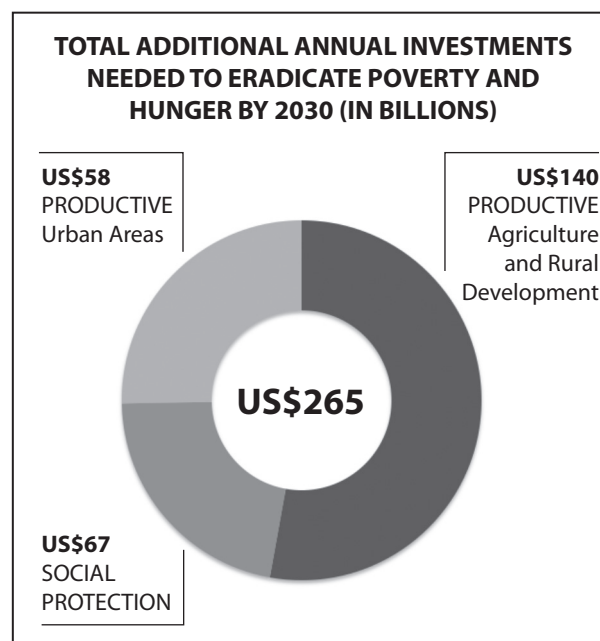
said sector also creates sustainable on-farm and off-farm livelihood opportunities, increases productivity of the sector – further boosting global and regional food security, and generates more business opportunities as the sector is able to respond to increasing global demand for food. (FAO, 2019)

Underinvestment in agriculture

However, in spite of its critical importance, the agriculture sector has been generally neglected in terms of investments. The said sector has only received (from 2009 to 2014) marginal share of government expenditure (below 10 per cent), official development assistance (5.5%), commercial credits (5%) and foreign direct investment (3%). In South-East Asia, agriculture only receives 3% of investments in credit. (FAOSTAT, 2016)



To be able to achieve the goals of eradicating global poverty and hunger, FAO estimates that additional investments of US\$265 billion per year are needed, with US\$140 billion of said amount spent on agriculture and rural development. This will entail a significant increase in public and private, domestic and foreign investment, including investments by farmers and small-scale producers. (FAOSTAT, 2016)



Role of farmers and small-scale producers

According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Environment Program, in 2013, around 2.5 billion people were employed, partially or entirely, in 500 million small family farms worldwide. And that smallholder producers/family farms supply about 70 per cent of Africa's total food requirements and provide around 80 per cent of the food consumed in both Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. However, despite their important role in feeding the world, smallholder producers in developing countries, due to decades of neglect and underinvestment, account for a large proportion of the poor. Estimates show that 70 per cent of the developing world's 1.4 billion extremely poor people live in rural areas, particularly in South Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa. (UNCTAD, 2015)

Thus, the conventional approach has been to attract FDIs (who have the capital and technology) into the agriculture sectors of developing countries to fuel growth. However, a complimentary strategy could be to strengthen the capacity of smallholder producers to enable them invest responsibly in their farms (in the form of farm improvements) and agricultural enterprises. Thereby improving productivity and eventually income. This can be done through public investments for the delivery of agricultural infrastructures/facilities, support services, agricultural inputs, research and development, and extension services that will directly benefit the smallholder producers and improve their productivity, efficiency and competitiveness, and in improving policies and mechanisms that will allow smallholder farmers access to agricultural credit/financial services, markets and educational services. (FAO, 2019)

By investing in smallholder producers/family farms, governments and development institutions will be able to increase the productivity and income of smallholder farmers thereby directly addressing its goals of ensuring food security (increased productivity means food in the table) and poverty alleviation (increased productivity means more crops to sell).

However, investments in production should be complimented with investments in the other sections of food systems such as processing, storage, transportation, marketing, and consumption.

ASEAN push for investment in agriculture

Recognizing the critical role that agriculture plays in poverty alleviation and food security (with ASEAN being one of the most productive agricultural baskets in the world - producing in 2012 129 million tons of rice, 40 million tons of corn and 171 million tons of sugarcane, while exporting some 18 million tons of food), and the pressing need for investment in the said sector, nation

members of the ASEAN have manifested in key issuances and declarations addressing said concerns. Two such declarations are the ASEAN Vision 2020 and the ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry.

More and better investments

Inflow of investment in agriculture in the ASEAN region has been robust in the last two years. In 2017, total FDI in agriculture and forestry rose to US\$4.2 billion. A 57% increase from the previous year. (ASEAN, 2018)

In 2018, FDI in the said sector tapered at US\$4 billion. ASEAN companies remained the largest investors in agriculture with 84% or US\$3.4 billion of FDIs into agriculture being intraregional. (ASEAN, 2019)

However, it is not enough that more investments flow into agriculture. Measures should also be taken to ensure that such investments are "better" - in terms of being "responsible, addressing the needs of communities, farmers, investors and the broader environment," as not all investments are equally beneficial and may actually carry significant risks for stakeholders. (FAO, 2017)

Thus, to address opportunities and challenges from the influx of big foreign and domestic investments in agriculture, the ASEAN has also developed and endorsed its own guidelines for responsible investment in the food, agriculture and forestry sectors.

III. CFS-RAI & AGRAI: PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems refers to "the creation of productive assets and capital formation, oriented to support the realization of food security, nutrition and sustainable development, including increased production and productivity. It requires respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and other relevant human rights instruments." (FAO, 2019)

Following are the two main documents that detail the implementation of "responsible investment in agriculture and food systems:"

a. The Committee on World Food Security's Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI)

The primary objective of CFS-RAI is to promote responsible investment in agriculture and food systems that contribute to food security and nutrition, thus supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Civil society organizations (CSOs) under the Civil Society Mechanism for the CFS (CSM4CFS) have engaged the process at various levels, bringing key elements of their advocacies into the mandated CFS instrument.

Although approved by the United Nation's Committee on World Food Security, the CFS-RAI is voluntary and non-binding and should be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law, with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments.

The CFS-RAI also acknowledges the roles and needs of smallholders and other stakeholders in addressing food security and nutrition, and are designed to be applicable to all sectors and all stages of agriculture and food systems.

It also addresses stakeholders involved in, benefitting from, and affected by investments in agriculture and food systems.

The 10 Principles of CFS-RAI

The 10 principles of CFS-RAI are founded on the overarching values of human dignity, nondiscrimination, equity and justice, gender equality, holistic and sustainable approach, consultation and participation, the rule of law, transparency, accountability, continuous improvement, and respect for human rights and tenure rights. (For more details on the 10 principles of CFS-RAI, please refer to Annex 1 and/or <http://www.fao.org/3/a-au866e.pdf>)

The following are the 10 principles of CFS-RAI:

Principle 1: Contribute to Food and Nutrition Security

Principle 2: Contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development and poverty eradication

Principle 3: Foster gender equality and women's empowerment

Principle 4: Engage and empower youth

Principle 5: Respect tenure rights to land, fisheries, and forests

Principle 6: Conserve and sustainably manage natural resources, increase resilience, and reduce disaster risks

Principle 7: Respect cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, and support diversity and innovation

Principle 8: Promote safe and healthy agriculture and food systems

Principle 9: Incorporate inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes, decision-making, and grievance mechanisms

Principle 10: Assess and address impacts and promote accountability

b. The ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry

The ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (AGRAI) are inspired and grounded on the Committee on World Food Security's Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI) and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry adopted the voluntary ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry in 2018 after extensive public consultations. The Guidelines are grounded in the CFS-RAI and enriched with practice-based research, but tailored to the ASEAN context. The Guidelines were prepared for the ASEAN Secretariat by IISD and Grow Asia, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank Trust Fund, and benefitted from detailed inputs from FAO.

The Guidelines are addressed to ASEAN Member States (AMS) governments and adapted to the region's context and specific challenges, while also foreseeing key roles and responsibilities for stakeholders outside of government, including large-scale private actors. The Guidelines are voluntary in nature.

The Guidelines have been deemed necessary to maximize the development benefits from the expected rise in investments in agriculture (due to increasing demand for food) but, at the same time, minimizing the risks associated with such investments. Benefits from investments in agriculture includes providing employment & livelihoods, reducing poverty, improving food & nutrition security. On the other hand, risks can include food insecurity, displacement, resettlement & land issues, low quality jobs and gender inequity, climate change and environmental degradation, and governance failures and disputes.

The primary purpose of the said Guidelines is “to promote investment in food, agriculture and forestry in the ASEAN region that contributes to regional economic development, food and nutrition security, food safety and equitable benefits, as well as the sustainable use of natural resources.”

The following are the other objectives enumerated by the Guidelines:

- Establishing favorable conditions to attract responsible investment in food, agriculture and forestry (FAF) sectors through a clear policy and regulatory framework nationally and a more coherent approach across ASEAN; clarity of roles for the various agencies and institutions involved; and a well-designed system of institutions and processes for investment promotion, screening, monitoring etc.;
- Striking a balance between interests – including strengthening the capacities of other stakeholders, contractually requiring investors to meet their obligations and creating instruments and tools to further cooperation – supports the primary purpose of the Guidelines;
- Creating a framework to guide AMS, large and small investors, and other actors in the development of responsible and sustainable agricultural investment and value chains in the region; and
- Creating a set of interests, which serves as a reference for decisions, behaviors and actions over the mid- to long- term.

To achieve the above objectives, the following guidelines, addressed to AMS governments, were proposed:

Guideline 1: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should contribute to food security, food safety, and better nutrition.

Guideline 2: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should contribute to equitable, sustainable, inclusive, culturally respectful, and appropriate economic development and the eradication of poverty.

Guideline 3: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should foster equality, engagement, and empowerment for women, young people, indigenous peoples and marginalized groups.

Guideline 4: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should respect tenure of land, fisheries, and forests, and access to water.

Guideline 5: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should conserve and sustainably manage natural resources, in particular ASEAN’s forests.

Guideline 6: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should support the generation and diffusion of sustainable and appropriate technologies and practices for resource efficient, productive and safe FAF systems.

Guideline 7: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should increase resilience to, and contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, natural disasters, and other shocks.

Guideline 8: Responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should respect the rule of law and incorporate inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes and grievance mechanisms.

Guideline 9: There should be mechanisms to assess and address economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts and promote accountability particularly with respect to vulnerable and marginalized groups, indigenous peoples and local communities.

Guideline 10: Regional approaches to responsible investment in FAF in ASEAN should be strengthened.

Although the ASEAN Guidelines on RAI were based on the CFS-RAI, it was, however, adapted to the ASEAN context with greater emphasis given to technology and innovation, climate change and natural disasters, regional approaches, and home/host country dimensions (as 80% of investments in the Southeast Asian region comes from countries within the region itself).

(For more details on the ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry, please refer to <https://www.aseanraiguidelines.org/guidelines>)

IV. EMPOWERING THE YOUTH SECTOR TO CARRY OUT AND BENEFIT FROM RAI

Rationale for engaging the youth in RAI

Aside from strengthening the capacities of smallholder producers/family farms to invest in and benefit from responsible agriculture, engaging and empowering the youth has also proven to be crucial as: getting the youth into agriculture can rejuvenate an aging sector and, subsequently, increase global food production (as production needs to increase by 60% by 2050); empowering the youth, including farmers, agri-entrepreneurs and workers, to engage in agricultural investments also helps reduce youth unemployment; and successful young agri-entrepreneurs will create livelihood opportunities which will reduce unplanned and distress rural-urban and international migration. (FAO, 2019)

Challenges in engaging the youth in RAI

However, there are major challenges in getting young people engaged in agriculture that needs to be overcome first, these are:

- The lack of youth-led organizations or organizations that should be working with the youth to provide the essential services they need;
- The absence of an enabling environment (i.e. institutions, laws, policies, incentives) that would encourage their engagement in agriculture; and
- Limited personal/individual capacities (i.e. skills and knowledge in agricultural production, processing, marketing, etc.) of young people.

The combination of these three factors greatly limits the capacity of young people to invest and benefit from investments in agriculture. These factors also limit young people's access to land, finance/credit and markets which are essential to succeed in agriculture. (FAO, 2019)

Existing capacities of the youth in CLMV to carry out and benefit from RAI

As part of the FAO Umbrella Program, an initial assessment workshop was conducted, in partnership with AsiaDHRRA, from June 19 to 21, 2019 in Hanoi, Viet Nam to determine the current capacity of the youth/youth organizations in the CLMV sub-region to carry out and benefit from responsible investments in agriculture. The following were the major findings of the workshop:

- **Definition of “youth”** – The general consensus during the workshop on the definition of what

constitutes “youth” focuses more on “age” which is from 15 to 35 years old. Although such age range provides a good representation of the youth's ability to adopt and learn new technologies and skills, defining what constitutes “youth” should not only consider physical age but also the characteristics, capacities and demographics of “young people” in a given sector, in a given country. For example, in Japan and Korea, 50 years old is still considered relatively young compared to the average age of Japanese farmers which is 70 years old. The concept of “young farmers” should not be limited to physical age but should be equated more with the concept of “second liner” farmers development.

- **Institutional set-up** – The workshop indicated that there are existing formal structures (i.e. committees, TWGs, etc.) for the implementation of existing laws related to agricultural development. There are also existing mechanisms, platforms and networks in each country but there seems to be no cross-sectoral coordination (GO-PO, GO-NGO, etc.) among these mechanisms. Also, participants from Myanmar indicated that the youth had neither presence nor participation in most of these coordination mechanisms in their country. Laos and Cambodia (Vietnam provided no data), on the other hand, indicated adequate youth presence and participation in said mechanisms.

To improve youth participation in coordination mechanisms, the following recommendations were made by the workshop participants:

1. Cambodia – Enact policies that would require that a third of the members of said mechanisms be youth and that would make youth participation in policy implementation and decision-making mandatory;
2. Laos – Conduct of trainings to capacitate youth leaders in research and advocacy to allow for their effective participation in said coordination mechanisms, and of annual meetings of young farmers to discuss RAI;
3. Myanmar – Conduct an evidence-based study that would validate youth participation, conduct programs that would capacitate young farmers and strengthen their cooperatives/organizations; and
4. Vietnam – Develop and provide capital, land policy, information market and advisory services for the youth sector, develop models/best practices of youth participation in agriculture, tap donors/funds for start-ups of young farmers/entrepreneurs, and conduct capacity building trainings for young people.

In terms of existing youth organizations, most of these organizations, however, have limited or do not focus on

the youth in the agriculture sector. Similarly, there are numerous support services available for the agriculture sector in each of the countries but, again, none of these give attention to the youth in agriculture.

- Laws, policies and Incentives – The workshop also indicated that there are numerous good laws and policies related to agriculture. However, the issue is more on the full and effective implementation of such laws and policies. There also seems to be sufficient laws and policies focusing on the youth but none dedicated for the needs and concerns of the youth in agriculture. However, most of the participants cited existing land-related laws (Laos, Myanmar & Viet Nam), access to financing/credit laws (Laos and Myanmar), and agriculture-related laws (Cambodia and Myanmar) that need to be revised to facilitate support for youth participation in agriculture.

- Organizational Capacities – There are numerous public and private organizations that provide agricultural services (e.g. trainings, credit, insurance, etc.) in the countries represented in the workshop. However, the youth sector in general has very limited access to such services mainly due to strict requirements (e.g. collateral) and procedures, high interest rates for credit, lack of awareness of availability of such services, and lack of enabling policies. Again, most of these service providers do not proactively focus or work with the youth in the agriculture sector.

Below are the services that participants have identified as being least accessed by the youth in their countries and the corresponding reasons why such services have been inaccessible:

SERVICES	MAIN CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH TO ACCESS THE SERVICE
CAMBODIA	
Business incubation	New establishment Limitation of capacity/knowledge
Knowledge exchange	Less program/platform/implementation Less regional intervention
Information & communications technology	Limitation of capacity/knowledge
Value addition & processing	Limitation of capacity/knowledge High cost of energy/transportation/raw materials/inputs
Certification schemes	Low value from public awareness
LAOS	
Access to credit/micro-finance	Problem of interest reduction Problem of collateral Problem of simplification of procedures
Saving schemes	Increase interest Increase income of (young) farmers
MYANMAR	
Access to credit	Poor in policy & guidelines
Agricultural insurance	Lack of knowledge on insurance policy Only one insurance company (foreign)
Saving schemes	No practice
Linkages between buyers & sellers of raw produce	Poor support to develop farmer- producer groups & associations in states & regions
Strengthening capacities of members to develop agri-business skills, including the development of business plans, agribusiness development services in general	Donors and funding agencies are less interested in focusing on young farmers
Business incubation	Access to information Low education Low IT
Facilitate knowledge exchange	Very few organizations (or) embassies
Collective marketing of products	Poor support by regional government

SERVICES	MAIN CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH TO ACCESS THE SERVICE
Training/information on policy processes	Poor support by national and regional governments
Value addition, transformation, processing	Little budget allocation
Certification schemes (incl. both quality and sustainability standards)	Poor knowledge of certification schemes
VIET NAM	
Value addition, transformation, processing Agricultural insurance Access to credit Certification schemes (incl. both quality and sustainability standards) Training to improve contract negotiation skills Linkages between buyers and sellers of raw produce Strengthening capacities of members to develop agri-business skills, including the development of business plans, agribusiness development services in general Business incubation Facilitate knowledge exchange Collective marketing of products Training/information on policy processes	Limited capacity of service provider Complicated formalities Low awareness of organization Lack of information

Key areas to strengthen youth involvement in RAI

During the workshop, participants were also asked to identify capacity needs/gaps in terms of organizational capacity (this refers to the main entities or organizations that are involved in policy-making processes related to investments in agriculture and food systems), individual capacity (refers to skills, knowledge, education, training and assets), and enabling environment (or existing national and international policies, strategies, laws and incentives relevant to agricultural investment) that need to be prioritized. The following were the common priority capacity needs/gaps identified:

In terms of Organizational Capacity:

1. Capacity to develop the entrepreneurship skills of farmers;
2. Capacity for business incubation;
3. Capacity for market analysis;
4. Need to mobilize/organize Young Farmers Cooperatives at the village level;
5. Need to engage government (e.g. Farmers Affairs Committee) to develop policy and programs dedicated for young farmers;
6. Need to organize Sub-sector Working Groups on Youth in Agriculture with representatives from GOs, FOs and CSOs); and
7. Need to conduct “Young Farmers Forums” for young farmers in the rural areas to facilitate discussions and actions towards developing support for said sector.

For Individual Capacity:

1. Capacity of rural youths in establishing and managing agribusiness ventures;
2. Skills and knowledge in accessing land and developing said land;
3. Skills and knowledge in organic farming;
4. Need to expose young farmers to best practices/models of RAI through on-the-job trainings; and
5. Management skills for running individual and collective farms.

For Enabling Environment:

1. Government credit support and subsidy for young farmers;
2. “Youth positive” land access policy; and
3. Policy that will allow young farmers access to markets at the national and local levels.

Initial mechanisms and activities

The following initial mechanisms and activities were identified by workshop participants for the promotion and involvement of the youth sector in RAI:

Viet Nam

Formulation of an “action plan” for the coordination of all organizations from Viet Nam represented in the workshop for the conduct of a follow-up activity at the national level.

Cambodia:

1. Conduct of a consultation workshop at the national level to identify the potential/capacity of the youth to participate in agriculture investments;

2. Set-up/identify models/best practices of young agri-entrepreneurs; and
3. Facilitate/link young agri-entrepreneurs with private agribusinesses.

Myanmar

Meet with “national-level policy makers” (i.e. Farmers Affairs Committee, Amyothar Hluttaw) to discuss and urge said policy makers to promote/enact laws, policies, regulations and services/programs for RAI and the youth.

Laos

1. Set-up a coordinating mechanism for possible post-workshop activities at the national level;
2. Conduct of a national consultation workshop on RAI to be participated in by representatives from GOs, NGOs/CSOs, FOs, POs and FAO; and
3. Establish mechanisms for continued communication/engagement with FAO-Laos.

At the regional level, FAO and AsiaDHRRRA agreed to sustain its partnership to support the implementation of the FAO umbrella program in the ASEAN region. Specifically, FAO and AsiaDHRRRA will jointly: (a) promote understanding and awareness on CFS-RAI principles and AGRAI, with focus on youth, among key stakeholders (e.g. concerned government agencies, CSOs, peoples’ organizations, FAO country offices, private sector) at the national and sub-national levels; (b) popularize cases (issues and opportunities) on RAI and youth in the ASEAN region; and (c) provide a venue for the gathering of different key stakeholders to learn and share experiences and issues on RAI.

AsiaDHRRRA and its member-DHRRAs in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam, with support from FAO, will carry-out:

1. A regional training for facilitators in conducting national capacity assessment workshops and studies on RAI;
2. National consultation-workshops on RAI and youth;
3. A case documentation on RAI and Youth;
4. A regional forum on RAI and youth; and,
5. An online campaign on RAI and Youth.

V. CONCLUSION

Although CFS-RAI and the AGRAI are voluntary and non-binding, the contributions that responsible investments in agriculture can make in addressing poverty and food security, together with the key role that the guidelines will play in curbing the risks that comes with large-scale agricultural investments, are too critical for governments not to institutionalize these guidelines into national policies.

There is enough recognition among the international development institutions for the need to promote responsible investments in agriculture and the critical role that the youth can play in agricultural development. However, the level of awareness among policy makers, and even CSOs, of the CFS-RAI and AGRAI guidelines at the country level still needs to be improved. More importantly, the private sector has to be effectively engaged for it to support and adhere to the guidelines. Translation of the guidelines into specific national policies, and the establishment of advocacy platforms for such policies or the implementation of existing relevant policies, will also have to be worked on. This will entail awareness and capacity building among policy makers, farmers organizations and CSOs (including youth organizations) on the RAI guidelines and on policy formulation and advocacy. This is a task that cannot be done by just one sector. Thus, the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches in translating the RAI agenda at the national and regional levels. This can be an opportunity to catalyze partnerships, through constructive engagements among stakeholders, to sustain the agenda and have it integrated into the on-going and planned investments from both public and private sectors.

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ACRONYMS:

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AMS	ASEAN Member States
AGRAI	ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry
CFS-RAI	UN Committee on World Food Security's Principles of Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Viet Nam
CSOs	Civil society organizations
FAF	Food, agriculture and forestry
FAO	United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOs	Farmers organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOs	Government organizations
POs	People's organizations
SDGs	Social Development Goals (under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)
UN	United Nations

ANNEX 1:

The following are the 10 principles of CFS-RAI:

Principle 1: Contribute to Food and Nutrition Security

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems supports States' obligations regarding the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, and all intended users' responsibility to respect human rights.

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems contributes to food security and nutrition, particularly for the most vulnerable, at the household, local, national, regional, or global level, and to eradicating poverty through enhancement of production, agriculture infrastructures, access to food and water and increase income.

Principle 2: Contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development and poverty eradication

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems contributes to sustainable and inclusive economic development and poverty eradication through the creation of new jobs, promotion of occupational safety and healthy working conditions, and improving income and social protection.

Principle 3: Foster gender equality and women's empowerment

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems fosters gender equality and women's empowerment by eliminating gender discrimination, advancing women's equal rights to tenure, land, natural resources, production tools, support services, education/training, information and markets, and enhancing women's participation in decision-making and equitable sharing of benefits.

Principle 4: Engage and empower youth

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems engages and empowers youth by advancing their access to land, natural resources, inputs, production tools, markets, information, education, training, jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities, innovations and new technologies, and other support services, such as extension and credit.

Principle 5: Respect tenure rights to land, fisheries, and forests

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems respects legitimate tenure rights to land, fisheries, and forests, as well as existing and potential water uses.

Principle 6: Conserve and sustainably manage natural resources, increase resilience, and reduce disaster risks

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems conserves, and sustainably manages natural resources, increases resilience, and reduces disaster risks through the conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources, reduction of waste and losses in production and post-harvest operations, increasing resilience of agriculture and food systems to the effects of climate change, and the integration of traditional and scientific knowledge towards sustainable production intensification.

Principle 7: Respect cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, and support diversity and innovation

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems respects cultural heritage and traditional knowledge,

and supports diversity, including genetic diversity, and innovation by respecting cultural heritage sites and systems, promoting locally adapted and innovative technologies and practices, recognizing the contributions and roles of smallholder farmers, and promoting fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

Principle 8: Promote safe and healthy agriculture and food systems

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems promotes safety and health through the promotion of safety, quality, and nutritional value of food and agricultural products, animal and plant health and welfare, management and reduction of risks to public health across agriculture and food systems, and enabling consumer choice through availability and access to safe, nutritious, diverse and culturally acceptable food.

Principle 9: Incorporate inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes, decision-making, and grievance mechanisms

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems should abide by national legislation and public policies, and incorporate inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes, decision-making, and grievance mechanisms, accessible to all. This shall include transparent sharing of investment related information, effective and meaningful consultations with stakeholders, especially indigenous peoples, to be affected by investments, ensuring respect for human rights and legitimate tenure right in cases of conflict.

Principle 10: Assess and address impacts and promote accountability

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems includes mechanisms to assess and address economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts, considering smallholders, gender, and age, among other factors, and respects human rights and promotes accountability of each actor to all relevant stakeholders, especially the most vulnerable.

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