



Executive Summary

CSOs' Independent Evaluation of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) – Asia



A) Introduction

The Global Fund for Agriculture (also referred to as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program or GAFSP) was established in April 2010 after the 2007-2008 global food crisis. Aid to small-scale agriculture had been steadily decreasing for decades despite the fact that there are over 500 million small-scale food producers and that growth in the agriculture sector is 11 times more effective at reducing poverty than growth in any other sector.

The GAFSP was established with the primary goal of helping to fill the gap in investment for small-scale food producers in developing countries in order to improve food security and reduce poverty. The Public Sector Window (PuSW) supports medium- and long-term country-led interventions. Since April 2010, ten donor countries and one foundation have contributed \$1.2 Billion to the PuSW (as of February 2017), and over 35 developing nations¹, including 11 in Asia, have received funding from GAFSP. The GAFSP also works through the Private Sector Window (PrSW), which provides financing aimed at increasing the commercial potential of small and medium, and big-sized agri-businesses and farmers. A total of \$226 Million has been allocated to PrSW projects as of December 2016.²

The GAFSP is now undertaking a full program evaluation. The program evaluation is also expected to inform the current discussion around the vision of the future GAFSP.

B) Scope and Objectives of the Study

This independent CSOs' evaluation, facilitated by ActionAid USA, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) and Réseau des organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA), aims to give room for the final beneficiaries' expressions on the overall projects and actions, mainly under the Public Sector Window, in order to capture farmers/FOs', NGOs', and other CSOs' perspectives on the GAFSP functions and impacts, and its areas of improvement. It will feed into the full program evaluation of GAFSP.

This evaluation was limited to the GAFSP as it was implemented in Asia. A separate evaluation has also been done for GAFSP implementation in Africa. These two evaluation reports will be consolidated into one evaluation report later.

¹Based on GAFSP reports, there are 49 PuSW projects in 31 countries as of June 2017 and 33 active PrSW projects in 21 countries as of December 2016. The 21 countries with PrSW projects included 5 which had no PuSW projects.

²GAFSP. Private Sector Window Investment Portfolio Review, December 31, 2016.

C) Methodology

The methodology of the evaluation consisted of:

- a. a review of existing reports and documents related to GAFSP Asia produced by CSOs and FOs, especially AFA and ActionAid,
- b. key informant interviews with ten (10) leaders of FOs and CSOs in Asia who have engaged with GAFSP,
- c. focus group discussions (FGDs), particularly two FGDs involving 10 AFA leaders from 7 countries and four (4) country FGDs with a total of 29 participants, and
- d. a survey of FO and CSO leaders with a total of 11 respondents from 6 countries and a shorter survey with the FGD participants with 17 respondents from 3 countries.

D) Findings and Recommendations

1) Relevance and Coherence and Consistency of the Program Objectives

The GAFSP program objectives are seen as clear, coherent and reflective of the priority given to food security and nutrition. However, the evaluation emphasized the need to highlight certain objectives. These objectives include (a) land tenure issues, (b) the strengthening of farmers' organizations (FOs), including cooperatives, (c) the improvement of FO/CSO participation in decision making processes for GAFSP and for the broader local and national agricultural and food security policies and programs, and (d) the promotion of climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture.

2) Result and Impact

GAFSP's achievements and its support to small-scale farmers, particularly women, are clear based on the indicators emphasized by GAFSP (production and income, nutrition and number of men and women beneficiaries reached). The evaluation showed, however, that these do not yet take into consideration the objectives that FOs see as very important, particularly improving land tenure, strengthening FOs, enhancing FO/CSO participation in decision making processes, promoting climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture and supporting women leadership and empowerment.

Further, GAFSP needs to strengthen linkages to markets in its projects and promote better coordination and mutual support between the Public Sector Window (PuSW) and Private Sector Window (PrSW) projects.

3) Involvement of FOs and CSOs in Decision-making

GAFSP is more participatory and transparent at the global level than at the country level. Most countries do not involve FO/CSOs or involve very few of them during the designing/preparation of their proposals to GAFSP; also, FOs/CSOs have seats in the national Project Steering Committees (PSC) in only three countries in Asia. It is vital for GAFSP

to address this concern effectively and promote good quality CSO participation at the country level.

4) Application and Selection Process

The criteria for grant selection of GAFSP, which are (a) country need, (b) country readiness, and (c) proposal readiness, are good, but the effects of climate change and the need for climate change adaptation and mitigation of countries also have to be considered.

Equitable allocation of GAFSP support across regions needs to be ensured and GAFSP should be opened not only to countries qualified based on the criterion of need (level poverty and hunger -- and effects of climate change), but also to specific regions/areas in need, but which are in countries that would not be qualified. Further, the SC members, especially the CSO representatives, should have a more active role in identifying the members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and at least one of the TAC members should come from FOs/CSOs or be very familiar with them.

5) Project Level Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation

While FOs/CSOs are seen more as implementers rather than as strategic partners in the GAFSP supported projects, even their role as implementers is limited, especially for the FOs. The role of FOs/CSOs is weakest in monitoring and evaluation.

A major issue for most of the GAFSP projects is their sustainability beyond the funding support from GAFSP. Most of the projects are focused on production and are not yet well linked to markets. Also, most small-scale farmers in the project areas are not organized into strong and viable agricultural cooperatives or social enterprises which are necessary for the sustainability of the project results.

6) Sustainability of GAFSP

Among the recommendations for ensuring GAFSP's financial sustainability are the following:

- a. Highlight the multi-stakeholder and participatory nature of GAFSP, and the importance of agriculture in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- b. Reach out to other countries/ donors;
- c. Explore the possibility of linking GAFSP to the Green Climate Fund; and
- d. Explore the possibility of a new kind of tax to generate resources from market transactions.

7) Coherence and Coordination of the GAFSP Stakeholders

The level of coordination among the program stakeholders (government, FOs/CSOs, donors, development organizations and private sector) is low at the country level and especially at the sub-national level.

In terms of coherence with the policy guidance of the World Committee on Food Security (CFS), it was noted that this is present in the proposals/ project documents. However, this coherence is often less visible in implementation, where, for example, the promotion of agri-ecology, gender equality and land tenure security is not emphasized enough.

In addition to those already cited above, the evaluation also made the following recommendations, among others:

- a. Include women's empowerment in the project components to ensure women's equal right to own land and productive assets; provide technical assistance, funds and other support directly to women; conduct training sessions, forums and other activities exclusively for women; and ensure meaningful women's representation in decision-making bodies at the village, province and national levels.
- b. Clarify GAFSP's definition of climate smart agriculture (and what the CSO representatives call climate resilient agriculture); and inventory, develop and promote local farmers' knowledge and technologies that are climate resilient.
- c. Develop and implement GAFSP's system for monitoring and feedbacking from local FOs to national FOs to the Asian CSO representative in the GAFSP Steering Committee; go beyond the indicator approach, to give more attention to FO/CSO participation and empowerment, FO/co-op strengthening, women's empowerment, nutrition and climate resilient agriculture; and use participatory techniques, e.g. citizens' scorecards.
- d. Support the capacity building of FOs at the local, national and regional/global levels and the strengthening of FO/CSO platforms by, among others, increasing the resources available to FOs/CSOs for capacity building sessions, learning exchanges and consultations, and by tapping non-government organizations to provide technical assistance for this.
- e. Ensure meaningful FO/CSO representation at the various levels (local, provincial and national) and throughout the whole process from project design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation; including, among others requiring meaningful FO/CSO representation in the Project Steering Committees at the national and local levels.
- f. Expand and provide more resources for the Missing Middle Initiative (MMI), which is an important effort to reach and support the small-scale farmers and their organizations and cooperatives.

- g. Establish a separate funding window for FOs – complementing the MMI, this separate funding window for FOs would have rules and processes that are more appropriate for FOs so that they can more readily access this; this window would focus on strengthening FOs and their platforms, to build up their capacity to engage constructively with GAFSP and governments and also to implement and sustain projects aimed at improving production, income and nutrition.
- h. Prioritize for the Private Sector Window (PrSW) agricultural cooperatives and social enterprises instead of business corporations. Cooperatives are especially important because they also empower small-scale farmers who are their members.

In sum, GAFSP has proven to be effective in attaining its objectives of improving production, income and nutrition, and supporting small-scale farmers and women. It is a multi-stakeholder partnership that has practiced participatory, inclusive and transparent governance at the global level. It needs to step up and improve in order to more effectively help in ensuring food security and eradicating poverty, and in attaining the other sustainable development goals of gender equality, reduced inequality and peaceful, just and inclusive societies.



CREDITS

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