

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Monday, 14 June 2021 13:15 GMT +08:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Transforming Pathways: Working with Farmers in Agri-Food Systems
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Dr. Glenn B. Gregorio (SEARCA); Dr. Tan Shiang Hee (CLA)
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14699/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14699/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

31

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18

4 19-30

16 31-50

11 51-65

0 66-80

0 80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

16 Male

15 Female

0 Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

29 Agriculture/crops

0 Fish and aquaculture

4 Livestock

2 Agro-forestry

3 Environment and ecology

1 Trade and commerce

0 Education

0 Communication

2 Food processing

0 Food retail, markets

0 Food industry

0 Financial Services

0 Health care

0 Nutrition

3 National or local government

0 Utilities

0 Industrial

0 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

1 Large national business

1 Multi-national corporation

9 Small-scale farmer

2 Medium-scale farmer

11 Large-scale farmer

0 Local Non-Governmental Organization

0 International Non-Governmental Organization

7 Indigenous People

0 Science and academia

0 Workers and trade union

0 Member of Parliament

7 Local authority

2 Government and national institution

0 Regional economic community

0 United Nations

0 International financial institution

0 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

0 Consumer group

0 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

### HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

Recognizing the importance of farmer involvement in creating healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food systems, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture and CropLife Asia organized an independent dialogue in support of the UN Food Systems Summit. There is an urgent need to create an environment that assures technology and its accompanying knowledge can be used in transforming agri-food systems in a sustainable way. To enable this, transformational leaders from government, research and development organizations, and the private sector must work together in operating change modalities that are appropriate to the local context. In this dialogue, what underpins an environment that supports smallholder farmer change will be determined directly from farmers. The three breakout sessions focus on particular action tracks: 1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; 3. Boost nature-positive production; and 5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress. These sessions help determine actions from the government, academe, and private institutions to support farmers in the transformation towards sustainable agri-food systems. Dialogue participants came from various backgrounds from Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam to ensure that various groups are represented to offer inputs coming from their rich and diverse on-the-ground farming experiences. At the beginning, the purpose and the need for engagement were discussed with the participants. They were also encouraged to freely express their ideas on the focus areas of the dialogue. Translators were also arranged to ensure that participants are able to participate fully during the discussions. The dialogue curator and facilitators are all expert practitioners from the academe, industry, and the government. They also attended the recommended training sessions to be familiar with how they will be able to lead the discussions with the principles of the summit in mind.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue was kept within the suggested 2.5-4 hour time frame. Keynote presentations on the purpose and objectives of the UNFSS and the Dialogues were given to orient the participants on the goals and how they could meaningfully participate in it. The Curator provided an overview of the opportunities and challenges for farmers in transforming Agri-Food Systems in SEA, in the context of the Summit Action Tracks, the complexity of food systems, and how the Dialogue could help shape pathways for the future of equitable and sustainable food systems. The Dialogue was able to get the necessary action points from the people who are exposed to the agri-food systems on the ground. All of these fall under principles 1 (act with urgency) and 2 (commit to the Summit). As for principles 3 (be respectful), 4 (recognize complexity), 5 (embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity), 6 (complement the work of others), and 7 (build trust), the breakout sessions served as platform that provided a comfortable environment through: acknowledgement of farmer-participants' backgrounds and level of knowledge prior to the discussion; highlighting the importance of their roles in agri-food systems alongside the programs/initiatives of the other stakeholders; allowing them to speak in their mother tongues through translators; by being given brief presentations on the topics that will be discussed to clarify some relatively technical concepts to the farmers before going deeper; and by giving all a chance to speak about the situation in their respective countries and the needed programs to solve the problems through their lens. This was complemented by the Plenary session by making them understand better that they have a major role to play in the transformation of agri-food systems as frontliners of the sector, and that they can even do so much more by becoming transfarmers.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Based on the learnings from the hosted dialogue and other similar fora that SEARCA has convened, it is important that the hosting organization share the objectives of the summit and have them aligned to its mission. It is also good to partner with like-minded organizations with on-the-ground experience. This is extremely useful in selecting participants known to have a good knowledge, experience, insights, and vision. This ensures that they can significantly contribute to the dialogue. A facilitator who is an expert and respected in the particular area should be identified and should be briefed on the background of participants. Since the Dialogue is designed as a targeted by-invitation only event, it is essential for the Convenor to assemble a relatively small group of participants based on its knowledge of and linkages with relevant professionals and organizations in the region. There is also a need to prepare a schedule in a way that is flexible and would not limit the flow and exchange of ideas during the discussion while keeping it within the limits of the dialogue. This does not just give more time for an unhurried in-depth discussion, it also opens up opportunities to broaden partnerships in transforming food systems for the common good.

# 3. METHOD

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The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

**DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?**

**Yes**

**No**

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

This independent dialogue was organized in response to the global call to transform food systems towards achieving all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by helping establish the direction for food systems through collective action with the involvement of all the key players under the UN Food Systems Summit 2021. SEARCA, together with CropLife Asia, convened this independent dialogue in recognition of the major role of smallholder farmers in the facilitation of transformation of the agri-food systems. This is the third independent dialogue organized by SEARCA under the Summit.

In the process of transformation, smallholder farmers need access to appropriate, affordable, profit-enhancing technologies and crop systems. However, it is essential that these technological interventions be sustainable and do not perpetuate the ecological degradation or social conditions so often seen in agricultural development.

In this dialogue, the important aspect of what underpins the environment (involving the mix of enablers, transformational leaders, government institutions, research and development organizations, and private sector groups) that must be created to support smallholder farmer change will be determined directly from the smallholder farmers. In particular, three breakout sessions were conducted under this independent dialogue that focused on the UNFSS action tracks namely:

Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all;  
Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production; and  
Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress.

Through these sessions, SEARCA and CLA have determined the actions from the government, academe, and private institutions to support farmers in the transformation towards sustainable agri-food systems based on the perceptions/responses of the smallholder farmers to the following key questions:

How can academia and research use digital technologies, work with farmers to produce safe and nutritious food for all?  
How can government institutions translate policies into actions in creating an enabling environment for nature-positive production?  
How can industry partners contribute to building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress?

All of these aim to make typical farmers become “transformers” (combination of ‘transformer’ and ‘farmers’) - by exploring innovative ways to work together with the academe, the industry, and the government in transforming food systems. The objective is to elevate the quality of life of the agricultural farmers through sustainable and resilient livelihood, access to modern networks and innovative market, and eventually to achieve a sustainable, inclusive, environment-friendly, and resilient food systems. At the same time, these interventions will ensure the production of safe and nutritious food from farm to table, and farmers will get their fair share of the economic development.

### ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

- Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

The dialogue has utilized various tools to provide the convenors rich information on the perceptions of the smallholder farmers in the Southeast Asian region in line with the various stakeholders and technology that can help improve their lives. These are: 1) pre-dialogue survey containing 25 questions given to the dialogue participants; and 2) the UNFSS 2021 Independent Dialogue proper.

Below are the main findings for each utilized tool:

Tool 1: Survey among dialogue participants

Prior to the actual dialogue, a survey questionnaire was circulated by the organizing teams to the participants. For this survey, a total of 18 respondents provided answers to 25 questions, and the common threads in their responses are as follows:

1. No shortage of initiative to help farmers from government, NGO, and the private industry;
2. Lack of awareness among farmers of food as part of a system that influences consumer health and nutrition, as well as the environment; and
3. One consequence of the above is production and farmer income-centered responses, concerning risks in farming, improving yield and efficiencies.

Wish list of farmers (items that are not being adequately addressed by current support programs; not in order of importance):

1. Economic Risk Reduction ;
2. Environmental Stewardship;
3. Value Chain Management;
4. Logistics Support; and
5. Organizing Farmers – to achieve economies of scale.

Tool 2: Simultaneous breakout dialogue sessions

During the dialogue proper, three simultaneous breakout sessions were conducted to gather answers to the key questions. The dialogue outcomes are as follows:

1. Less emphasis on consumer concerns for healthy and nutritious food.
2. Less emphasis on nurturing of traditional foods.
3. Some concern about the environment is reflected in government programs and farmer practice, but more information is needed to heighten farmer awareness and involvement in environmental stewardship.
4. Discussions focused on farmer empowerment through associations, technologies for cost reduction and yield maximization in the context of monoculture.
5. CONCLUSION: There is a general lack of understanding of the food systems concept and the role of farmers in shaping it.

New programs needed based on the responses of the participants:

1. Enhancing farmer understanding of their role in food system transformation, specifically focused on their role in the following:
  - a. Stewardship of the environment; and
  - b. Providing for nutrition and health of consumers
2. Training of farmers to be entrepreneurs and involvement in developing value adding processes.
3. Scaling up of existing programs, particularly those involving diversification and involvement of small farmers in value-adding activities.
4. Scaling up of diversification is particularly generally useful because it addresses the major deficiencies in the existing food system.
5. Recruiting a new generation of farmers (the youth) who can better execute the above programs and easily adapt to new and innovative technologies.

## ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
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- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

## KEYWORDS

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Key Question: How can academia and research use digital technologies, work with farmers to produce safe and nutritious food for all?

Outcomes:

1. The dialogue participants acknowledged the importance of the agri-food systems and the need to be aware of their role as stakeholders in the production of safe and nutritious food for all.
2. New digital technologies, especially the ones shared and presented during the breakout sessions, are of interest to farmers though some recognize that they are not that tech savvy and lack enough understanding about the technology.
3. Farmers consider the high costs for investing in new digital technologies; the generation and technology gap add up to the concerns on technology adoption.
4. Universities that carry out the high levels of research should be grounded and results should be easily translated in ways that farmers understand. Farmers expressed that research studies that are conducted to address their specific concerns are better for them.

Next steps:

1. Farmers and researchers are encouraged to think beyond production and must consider the implications to the whole value chain system.
2. Develop "trans-farmers" by making farmers understand that agriculture is beyond farming and there is a real business in agriculture.
3. Harnessing the benefits from digital technology will improve the current practices of farmers and they will evolve to agri-entrepreneurs, agri-businessmen, or agri-traders and marketers .
4. Educate more farmers on the new technologies and their level of application in agricultural activities.
5. Research outputs will be packaged in a way that will allow smallholder farmers to easily use and apply the technology.

### ACTION TRACKS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ✓ | Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all      |
|   | Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns              |
|   | Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production                       |
|   | Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods                          |
|   | Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress |

### KEYWORDS

- |   |                           |   |                         |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|   | Finance                   | ✓ | Policy                  |
| ✓ | Innovation                |   | Data & Evidence         |
|   | Human rights              | ✓ | Governance              |
| ✓ | Women & Youth Empowerment |   | Trade-offs              |
|   |                           | ✓ | Environment and Climate |



## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Key Question: How can government institutions translate policies into actions in creating an enabling environment for nature-positive production?

Outcomes:

1. The government is active with a good number of policies and programs that ensure protection of environment/natural resources along with food production. Examples include Good Agricultural Practices, organic farming, PalayCheck or Rice Integrated Crop Management, crop rotation, and intercropping. However, the problem lies in the implementation.
2. The role of extension is critical in strongly capacitating farmers in food production, as well as in promoting and implementing nature-positive production systems. Youth participation is important. They are next stewards of the natural production areas and the direct beneficiaries of the ongoing interventions. Currently, farmers are old.
3. Crop diversification is being done, but has not been widely practiced.
4. Land condition limits adoption of technologies promoting nature-positive production.
5. Technology and insurance for farmers are also needed.
6. For GM crops that promote nature-positive production, these are hindered by anti-groups.
7. There are no issues with regards to female farmers. There is no issue in adjusting the system to take their limitations into consideration.

Next steps:

1. Effective capacity building programs should be put in place to develop farmers. This must be complemented with science-based information that will promote and convince farmers that the programs really have an effect on the environment.
2. Technology should be made available to support the programs and insurance for farmers. Likewise, funds/credit to access the technology as well as infrastructure must be available.
3. Engage the youth.
4. Programs are there (e.g., Good Agricultural Practices, integrated pest management, etc) but there should be strict implementation/adherence.
5. Nature-positive production must be set as a national agenda for action to happen.
6. Incentives must also be provided such as insurance and market/income.

### ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
✓	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation		Data & Evidence
	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Key Question: How do industry partners contribute to building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress?

Current programs to build resilience - There are current programs provided by the government, private sector, and NGOs to support farmers to improve their productivity, knowledge, and income (e.g. subsidies program for farm input, training on Good Agricultural Practices and agronomic practices, market access tools, etc).

The following are some examples given by each country:

The Philippines - Banana and mango farmers are getting good support from the government and from the private sector through training programs. However, there is still a need for banana farmers to get disease resistant varieties to improve their production.

Thailand - The government has a policy to guarantee the price of corn grains being purchased from farmers

Indonesia - Support is given to rural areas, including technology provision provided by a member of the private sector and through subsidiary programs for farm inputs provided by the government

Vietnam : The government supports the new rural program, sustainable agriculture development program and capacity building for farmers.

There are recommendations to sustain the programs by engaging all stakeholders in the agricultural sector. More importantly, each stakeholder should be able to commit contributions to the program.

Online platforms and innovative technology - Online platforms such as marketing tools, mobile apps to have market access are made available in all countries. However, training should still be provided for some farmers in rural areas who are not well equipped with these online tools. In terms of innovative tools for farming, all countries are suggesting that drones should be supported to be used for their production (spraying program).

Gender equality - Female farmers are recognized in most countries, except for Vietnam where gender equality is a concern. Since women are only seen as house workers, they have less access to training and knowledge transfer programs in agriculture and farming.

### Next Steps

1. Some responses are directed towards commodity specific interventions:

Banana: Collaboration and investment on research and development from the government regarding new technologies (e.g. drones, resistant varieties against diseases).

Mango: Need to sustain government programs through the Philippine Mango Industry Roadmap; assistance provided by CropLife in line with pollination

2. Prioritize setting up the best ecosystem for multi stakeholder collaboration to support the increase of income of the farmers.

3. Need for weather forecasting equipment for accurate forecasts and actions/responses by corn farmers and in general develop agricultural resilience

4. Government support for enhanced information dissemination that reaches the farmers through the use of various modalities e.g., radio, TV, and online platforms

5. Environment-friendly agriculture and promote the use of technology in production especially drones.

6. Enhance the use of online platforms such as on marketing produced through developing websites/online selling agricultural products (Lazada and Shopee)

### ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There is a much needed boost in helping farmers become more aware of their role and value in improving and ensuring the sustainability of agri-food systems. The focus of agricultural education should not be solely on the science and technical aspects of agriculture. Much needs to be done on what it can do for society, primarily on empowering smallholder farmers as transformers --- agents of good nutrition, stewards of the environment, and drivers of economic change. This Dialogue was able to touch base with farmer leaders who, at their level, have not fully realized and understood that they play a major role in maintaining a healthy world. How they view themselves as farmers are very much focused on simply providing food to the population and for them to earn money for their respective families. To fully ensure that they would be able to actively play their role in the transformed food system, they should realize and function as partners of various stakeholders in environmental stewardship and in producing healthier products from the lens of nutrition.

Agricultural research should not be limited to ways that improve processes, but should be able to address the most pressing concerns of the farmers. The research results must be translated in layman's terms in order for them to be utilized. Though the farmers fully acknowledge that the government, private sector groups, and NGOs have been providing helpful programs and projects to them, it appears that there is a need to improve science communication. By translating research results and information about new technologies into something that farmers can easily relate to or something that would address their pressing concerns will minimize perceived risks from adopting new practices. This adds up to what they know about their farms and will improve efficiency, safety, and sustainability.

There is also a need to closely monitor and evaluate (M&E) the impact of programs/projects for farmers in line with their respective objectives, particularly the new technologies being introduced to the farmers so that they can be further improved by the service providers. By doing so, it will be easy to understand how well the farmers on the ground are actually benefiting from such interventions. Feedback, on the other hand, provides more information about their concerns, emerging issues, and gathers inputs on areas for further uptake of innovations. Farmers that are engaged and motivated will be easily integrated in a more inclusive agri-food system since their voices are consistently heard.

Farmers should be considered as partners and key players, and not mere beneficiaries. Farmers possess valuable indigenous knowledge for agricultural research and development that researchers could learn from and integrated in the overall knowledge systems and approaches.

### ACTION TRACKS

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# ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

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## ATTACHMENTS

- **Transforming Pathways Documentation**  
[https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Transforming-Pathways\\_Documentation-Report-Updated-draft.pdf](https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Transforming-Pathways_Documentation-Report-Updated-draft.pdf)
- **Transforming Pathways Documentation 1**  
[https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Annexes\\_Part1.pdf](https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Annexes_Part1.pdf)
- **Transforming Pathways Documentation 2**  
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- **Transforming Pathways Documentation 3**  
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- **Transforming Pathways Documentation 4**  
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- **Transforming Pathways Documentation 5**  
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- **Transforming Pathways Documentation 6**  
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