

FEED THE FUTURE ASIA: INNOVATIVE FARMERS PROJECT

The Feed the Future Asia Innovative Farmers project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development Regional Development Mission for Asia, introduces technologies into new markets with potential to support millions of smallholder farmers to boost their incomes while improving their food security and avoiding the need to migrate.

Despite reductions in extreme poverty in Asia, food insecurity and poverty persist. Millions of smallholder farmers in South and Southeast Asia struggle to improve their livelihoods, build resilience to extreme weather and adjust to shifting market demand. Adopting new agricultural technologies (e.g., seeds, tools, equipment and software) that make food production and distribution more efficient can assist them in achieving these goals.



A farmer tests a new automated irrigation technology that uses sensors and wifi, one of the many innovative technologies being used in Asia to improve farming efficiency. Photo credit: Winrock, International

This project focuses on regional trade and knowledge transfer among countries in Asia by harmonizing regional policy through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, while also strengthening technology networks through a Regional Innovation Hub based at Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as Innovation Communities throughout Asia. Challenge competitions are used to discover the best technologies, and partnerships are supported to bring these tools to farmers in all stages of the

supply chain – from production to marketing. The approach works with U.S. universities and local innovators to bring technology and innovative ideas from other countries within the region to focus countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia and Nepal, with the possibility for expansion to other countries in the region until 2020.

Pathways to Sustainability

Multiple technologies are in stages of transfer and sales have begun. Long-term success will derive from two primary factors – policy and partnerships. Policy reform lowers barriers to the natural trade of successful technology in the region, and harmonization helps all countries benefit equitably. Partnerships with American and regional businesses create investment opportunities and strengthen local market systems, which support technology availability and expanded adoption long after the end of the project. By connecting change agents across the region – innovators, investors, importers, manufacturers and associations – the project is building a robust network to carry on the work.

Focus Areas

The project targets youth – the innovative and essential future of agriculture – and works towards inspiring over 200,000 in the region with the many business opportunities in agriculture. Supporting resilience to weather shocks is also a key element, along with targeting women farmers as a critical, yet often untapped, source of change and growth.

For more information, please contact Kipp Sutton at ksutton@usaid.gov or Sutham Phurahong sphurahong@usaid.gov.

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