

JIRCAS Newsletter

for
INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION



Waiting for the Royal Ploughing Ceremony to start

The Royal Ploughing Ceremony is an annual ritual presided over by the Thai royal family to mark the beginning of the rice-growing season and to pray for a good harvest. Toward the end of the ceremony, different types of feeds are offered to the sacred white oxen to predict the coming harvest. A bountiful harvest of cereals, fruits and meat is expected this year. (Photo by T. Sugino)

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Center Function of JIRCAS

The Tropical Agriculture Research Center (TARC), the institute that preceded JIRCAS, was established in 1970. Naming a governmental organization as a “Center” was rather unusual at the time. The intention for naming it a “Center” was to have a new research area – overseas agriculture – that should cover all existing research areas, instead of having separate existing research areas at the same level. The Center, therefore, was meant to function as a pivotal and a comprehensive organization which can mobilize existing research forces. This basic spirit has not changed even as TARC evolved into JIRCAS 20 years ago.

The Statement of Operation Procedure of JIRCAS, a legal document, indicates that JIRCAS should secure partnerships with other research institutes, prefectures, universities, private institutes, international institutes and so on, as well as enhance information collection and utilization by activating its function as a central organization of agricultural research in developing regions. The Medium-Term Target (determined by the Minister-in-charge) also directs JIRCAS to collaborate with developing and developed countries, international organizations and non-governmental/private organizations as the sole Japanese research body that can comprehensively conduct agricultural researches for developing regions. We call these roles as “national center function” or simply “center function” in JIRCAS.

There are four sub-functions in the center function.

- 1) Function as a comprehensive and central organization: JIRCAS is expected not only to invite researchers from other institutes and universities in Japan to participate in its activities, but also to set strategies and coordinate activities for the overall management of international agricultural researches in Japan, by representing Japan in various international conferences and forums.
- 2) Function as an information center: the JIRCAS Law defines the function of collecting, analyzing and disseminating relevant information in the areas of international agriculture, forestry and fisheries. It is expected to perform this role systematically and continuously, and to further enhance its specialty by providing think-tank or consulting services.
- 3) Function as a human-resource center: for effective adoption of improved agricultural technologies, it is essential to develop the capacities of researchers as well as a wide range of experts who work in international agriculture and related fields in Japan and developing

regions. JIRCAS is executing various programs for human resource development in Japan and in developing countries.

- 4) Function of matching, mediation and gateway: connecting or matching researchers, institutions, their research needs, plans, capacities and experiences in Japan with those in foreign countries is becoming more and more important. JIRCAS is a gateway in Japan to foreign agricultural research.



International agricultural research tends to deal with broader and more complicated global-scale issues reflecting recent events on global food and environment. Securing partnerships among research institutes as well as relevant stakeholders including governments, private and education organizations and communities is considered indispensable in solving these issues. Partnership, therefore, is the keyword in this modern world’s internationally linked and networked research society. Science transcends national borders, thus conducting research activities in an isolated manner within a country is anachronistic.

JIRCAS’s main activity, needless to say, is hand-in-hand collaborative research activities in the agricultural fields in developing regions. However, strengthening of the above-mentioned functions, which only JIRCAS can perform, is considered vital not only for the effective implementation and dissemination of researches, but also for the improvement of Japanese presence in global society and the globalization of Japanese agricultural and related industries.

This issue of the newsletter provides a glimpse of some major activities for enhancing such “center functions” in response to global trends.

Osamu Koyama
Director
Research Strategy Office

Participation in New International Research Frameworks

The world food and agriculture situation has changed gradually since the beginning of this century. The Millennium Development Goals, established following the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, set out a global numerical target of reducing hunger and poverty rates by half in 15 years. This was one of the efforts to shift global attention to food and agriculture which was being forgotten due to a declining trend in food prices over the past decades. Also, the importance of poverty alleviation as an anti-terrorism strategy was stressed, and discussions about the effectiveness of agricultural development for poverty reduction were initiated. Nevertheless, aid and investments in agriculture did not recover well.

On the other hand, the use of biofuels was encouraged in the United States and the European Union. Food demand in emerging countries increased, stimulated by, for example, China's participation in the WTO. There was an upward trend in world food prices culminating in the food price crisis of 2007/2008. Social unrest occurred in more than 20 countries. Political leaders worried about the instability of the world food market and recognized the importance of food security as well as agricultural researches, leading them to express their concerns at various international conferences such as the G8 or G20 Summits.

Accordingly, there were big moves in agricultural research for development. Research centers belonging to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which were the engines of increased agricultural productivity in developing countries through development of improved varieties as seen during the Green Revolution, have been working semi-independently based on their own historical backgrounds. However, share of restricted funds has gradually increased and has limited managerial freedom. They also have to deal with the increased role of private sector entities such as bio-multinationals. In addition, there was a need to coordinate among centers towards the solution of global scale issues. Thus, after discussing the matter over several years, the

CGIAR underwent a large scale reform in 2009. Major changes include having a central fund council to handle the entire fund management and a legal body (Consortium) to allocate the funds to common research programs. The independence of each center was weakened but the integrity of the CGIAR system was strengthened.

In order to discuss global research strategy, the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) was organized by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and CGIAR. The first GCARD was held in France in March 2010 with the participation of many stakeholders. JIRCAS actively participated at the second GCARD in Uruguay, South America in October 2012 by providing personnel support to the secretariat. Global and regional research targets were suggested during the conferences, and the processes, such as partnerships, capacity building and information sharing, were discussed to achieve those targets.

Fifteen CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs), formulated by agricultural ecosystems, major food commodities etc., were approved one after the other and went into full activity last year. JIRCAS has been involved in a rice research program named the Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP) since the planning stages and participates as a strategic partner in its management (Fig. 1). This became possible because Japan has kept a leading position in rice research and has maintained close relationships with international research centers such as the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice). JIRCAS, as the focal point, is responsible for communicating and coordinating GRiSP activities with related Japanese institutes and universities. This partnership has promoted research information and human exchange and has forged win-win relationships. It has also helped in acquiring international competitive grants and in generating new research results. Japan had contributed greatly to CGIAR as a major financial donor in the past. However, Japan's presence in the CGIAR

has gradually decreased due to significant ODA budget reductions. JIRCAS is expected to contribute in the form of continuous research collaborations with CGIAR programs.

A series of G20 conferences held in France in 2011, on the other hand, has opened up discussions on many new initiatives related to agricultural research. As a result, a place to exchange ideas and opinions among national representatives on agricultural research, the Meeting of the G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS), was created in Mexico in 2012. President Masa Iwanaga of JIRCAS attended on behalf of Japan. Also, JIRCAS represents Japan in the Wheat Initiative (WI), a forum of coordination in global wheat research launched in 2011, with strong support from France. The WI, with international organizations and private companies also participating as members, aims to facilitate communication among G20 research institutes and other groups and organizations worldwide, complimenting existing frameworks such as the CGIAR CRPs. JIRCAS, exercising its “Center” function, communicates with domestic researchers in this area as well.

In addition, a G20 initiative called the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) was officially launched at the MACS. The basic idea was approved during the G20 meetings in 2011, prior to an informal stakeholders meeting which determined the framework defining its roles. It was also recognized at the G20 and G8 meetings in 2012. TAP provides a mechanism for fostering linkages among relevant existing multi-partner initiatives in capacity development and knowledge sharing for improved agricultural production in the tropics. FAO will serve as the Secretariat while France, China and others will provide the necessary funds. JIRCAS is currently the sole partner-member of TAP from Japan.

Another joint initiative, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, was established during the G8 Summit at Camp David in the United States, aimed at increasing food security and reducing poverty in Sub-

Saharan Africa. The G8 International Conference on Open Data for Agriculture was also held, with JIRCAS’s participation, to promote open access of agricultural data to users in Africa and worldwide.

World leaders are aware that global food and agriculture insecurity is a top-priority political and technological issue that needs to be addressed and solved. An optimum solution is still being sought, including one for international research. By moving the new frameworks for global partnership in capacity development and knowledge sharing in agricultural research (introduced in this article) into full-scale action, it is envisaged that researches with global themes can be implemented more effectively. Concerns are being raised about the continuity of field-level and low-profile researches which are relevant to local needs. Also, the interests of advanced countries and major donors who lead these frameworks do not necessarily reflect the interests of people in developing countries. JIRCAS needs to coordinate with other Japanese organizations and participate in many initiatives. It must convey its views from the standpoint of a research center based in a country that is heavily dependent on food imports and concerned about global food security.

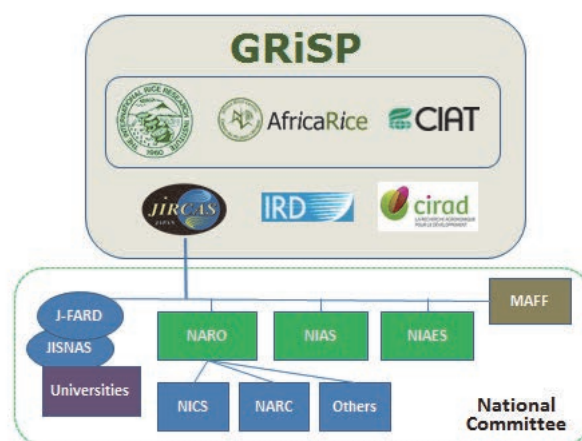


Fig. 1. Structure of GRiSP and Domestic Committee

Osamu Koyama
Director
Research Strategy Office

TICAD and CARD Initiatives - Linkage between Research and African Development

Africa is moving into the limelight. A great change has been brought about in the image of 49 countries comprising Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which geographically refers to all African countries except Sudan and 5 North African countries facing the Mediterranean Sea.

For a long time, SSA had often been unfairly described in generally negative terms due to frequent outbreak of rebellions and tribal conflicts, poverty and starvation, economic stagnation, spread of AIDS and tropical diseases, lower educational level and so on. The phrase “Hopeless Africa” was coined because long-term aid was perceived to have led to wastage, mismanagement and corruption and never truly resulted to positive economic development. In fact, there was basically no increase in GDP during the two decades since the 80’s due to lack of good governance in many countries, holding back economic growth in SSA countries. Average GDP per capita in SSA diminished to almost half its original level in this period because of rapid population growth (which doubled) in the region.

After the end of the Cold War (early 90’s), western countries were feeling “donor/aid fatigue.” Against this backdrop, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was launched in 1993 under the joint auspices of Japan and the United Nations with the aim of facilitating international interest in Africa and generating support for African development.

Economic development in SSA countries showed sudden growth at the start of the 21st century. From 2005 to 2009, average annual economic growth rate in Africa was 5.4%, with 22 out of 49 SSA countries recording more than 5% growth. African countries were experiencing rapid economic growth, ranking high alongside Asian countries.

Since then, SSA has broken out of its former status as a high risk and inefficient investment market. Now, foreign direct investments come one after another into their new market. However, active foreign investments to SSA place too much weight on the development and importation of natural resource-based commodities. This has substantially delayed development in the manufacturing industry and the agriculture sector which have high potential to create job opportunities for local workers. It is important to note that more than half of workers in SSA are currently engaged in agriculture-related fields. Also, demand for food items has increased in proportion to rapid urban population growth. This has led to a drastic increase in imported food, resulting to a decrease in food self-sufficiency ratio (supplied by domestic production) and more foreign currencies flowing out of SSA countries.

The number of chronically undernourished people in developing countries had gone down from 980 million (23.2% of total population) in 1990-92 (3-year average) to 852 million (14.9%) in 2010-12. This is almost in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which targeted a 50% reduction in the proportion of chronically

undernourished population by 2015. On the contrary, in SSA, the chronically undernourished had increased from 170 to 234 million. Its proportion to total population, though it went down slightly from 32.8% to 26.8%, did not decrease according to MDG expectations. Thus far, achieving the MDGs for SSA has been difficult and may not be attained by 2015.

Under these circumstances and in the wake of the 4th TICAD held in 2008, an initiative to support the self-help efforts of African countries focusing on rice production was launched. Called the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD), this consultative group of African countries and development partners aims to double rice production in SSA in a decade (2008-2018) and works on the development of a National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) in each member country.

As a member of the steering committee (consisting of 11 international organizations), JIRCAS, together with IRRI and AfricaRice, contributes to the management of CARD and its activities in the field of research and technology development. Specifically, JIRCAS has conducted research projects in Ghana, Benin, Senegal, Nigeria and Ethiopia, including a) development of new breeding lines by improving the existing genetic resources of upland and lowland rice that are suitable for African field conditions, b) development of an irrigation technology characterized with low life cycle cost and a modified Asian-type rice cultivation system suitable for African conditions, and c) expansion of rice cultivation areas in flood plains.

The 5th TICAD was held in Yokohama last June 2013. JIRCAS organized a TICAD V pre-event workshop titled “New Stages of Agricultural Research in Africa” at Yayoi Auditorium, the University of Tokyo, and facilitated discussions among experts at home and abroad. Furthermore, JIRCAS’s exhibit booth at the TICAD V venue featured panel displays which provided information on current JIRCAS research activities to African delegates.

The demand for good-quality rice (i.e., tasty and with easy storing and cooking qualities) has rapidly increased, as reflected in the overwhelming increase in domestic production. Imports have been accelerating year by year according to the population jump in cities in SSA. Research and technology development and extension of its outcomes are highly desired in order to improve rice production by small scale farmers, in terms of quantity and quality, and to increase their incomes and raise self-sufficiency ratio by domestic rice production in SSA countries. JIRCAS is very willing to contribute to the framework of CARD, which links research to development, to ensure that the targets are achieved in time for the 6th TICAD to be held 5 years from now.

Kazumi Yamaoka
Research Strategy Office

Triangular Cooperation in Mozambique - A Significant New Partnership in Africa

ProSAVANA, a tripartite activity under the Japan-Brazil Partnership Program (JBPP) to support agricultural development in Mozambique, southern Africa, has recently been attracting both domestic and foreign attention. The mission of ProSAVANA is to enhance and modernize agriculture in order to increase productivity and produce diversified agricultural commodities, as well as to create employment through agricultural investments and establishment of supply chains. It is aimed at improving the livelihoods of inhabitants in the Nacala Corridor area through inclusive and sustainable agricultural and regional development.

The ProSAVANA activity, which commenced in 2011, was implemented within the framework of triangular cooperation among Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and Mozambique's Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI). The ProSAVANA concept was inspired by the success story of Brazil's Cerrado Development Program (PRODECER) carried out jointly by Japan and Brazil. The target was set to the tropical savannah region of the Nacala Corridor area in the African continent between 13° to 17°S latitude, same as the Cerrado of South America. ProSAVANA is actually the first full-scale triangular cooperation in existence, with the emerging economy of Brazil contributing to the program as a donor country. This makes the program different from existing south-south cooperations.

JIRCAS has been participating in "Improving Research and Technology Transfer Capacity for Nacala Corridor Agriculture Development, Mozambique," otherwise known as "ProSAVANA-PI (*Pesquisa e Investigaçao* in Portuguese)," one of the three ProSAVANA projects since project formulation (preparatory stage) together with the JICA team. For appropriate agricultural development in this area, the feasibility study recommended that the capacity of agricultural research institutions should be primarily fostered to understand the agricultural and socio-economic environments in the target area, and that new technologies should be developed and deployed, making wise use of the knowledge gained from the PRODECER experience. The project was designed accordingly to achieve five main outputs, namely, i) Capacity strengthening of the regional centers of the national agricultural research institute (IIAM), ii) Evaluation of natural resources and socio-economics in the Nacala Corridor Area, iii) Development

of soil improvement technologies, iv) Development of appropriate cultivation technologies and v) Validation and demonstration of new agricultural technologies.

As one might expect, the on-going ProSAVANA-PI project is being implemented under a triangular framework agreement between Japan, Brazil and Mozambique, through JICA (on a joint venture with NTC International Co. Ltd. Inc. and JIRCAS), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) and the Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique (IIAM), respectively. The three parties are pushing forward to accomplish the above outputs by providing their own resources. Triangular cooperation is apparently more difficult than conventional bilateral aid agreements even at the project level. As Brazil is relatively inexperienced as a donor country, Embrapa, in contradiction of its intention, sometimes could not act in concert with the Japanese Team. There was also a scene, during the project planning, where the recipient (IIAM) got confused as two work plans separately prepared by Japan and Brazil were proposed in parallel. Cognizant of its responsibilities as members of advanced institutions, the Japanese Team (which include JIRCAS scientists) will try to fulfill the heavy demands of leading collaborative research activities in the Nacala Corridor through more effective harmonization and integration of triangular cooperation activities.



Photo: Meeting of scientists from Japan, Brazil and Mozambique to discuss the harmonization and integration of research activities for the achievement of project outputs. (Photo by Ms. Yukino Narumi, JICA Coordinator)

Satoshi Tobita
Crop, Livestock & Environment Division

Network on Irrigation and Water Resources - WWC/WWF and ICID

Agriculture - the biggest global water user

Agriculture uses 2,504 billion tons of freshwater resources annually, accounting for 70% of total global water use (on an intake basis). In Asia, where 60% of the world's population resides, agriculture accounts for 82% of total water use in the region, most of which is irrigation water supplied to paddy fields for rice production. Water usage by Asian agriculture alone accounts for about half of total global water use including domestic and industry use.

Introducing high yield crop varieties under rainfed conditions is very risky because they are more vulnerable than local varieties in dry conditions, therefore a well-managed irrigation system is necessary to substantially reduce risk and eliminate anxiety. Crop yields can drastically increase only under irrigated conditions, where farmers can introduce high yield varieties with a sense of security, bringing its abilities into full play with effective use of fertilizer.

Although irrigated farmlands represent only 20.3% of the 153.35 million ha of total arable land in the world, it accounts for about 40% of global cereal production, supporting humankind's ever-increasing demand for food. Further development of irrigated agriculture is vital towards ensuring global food security for future generations. As irrigated agriculture requires large amounts of water resources, conflicts or competition with other water use sectors must be overcome.

Systems of preventing conflict over water resources

The 21st century has been called "the century of water." Because water is essential and indispensable to maintaining life, an increasingly tight demand for local water supply is a major issue. Water sometimes flows across borders of countries, and there is a growing concern about the possibility of armed conflicts and intensified hostilities between nations in many places across the world in a scramble for water resources. Moreover, market competition among massive water-dependent facilities and industries has also given rise to a 'de facto' scramble, made in an indirect way each time a phase appears, in which water resources security becomes key to a nation's economic rise or downfall. To prevent frictions between sectors or nations from escalating amid political and economic tensions, and to prevent international and local dispute on water resources from worsening, water use efficiency must be improved rapidly and sharply not only in conflict areas but also in every corner of the globe and in every sector of society. Efforts should focus on building, promoting and maintaining sustainable water systems.

World Water Forum (WWF) and World Irrigation Forum (WIF)

The World Water Forum (WWF) is the world's largest gathering of stakeholders on water-related issues. World leaders, high-level and local government officials, water experts, UN agency as well as NGO and civil society

representatives, young professionals, coordinators and volunteers, among others, participate once every three years to share ideas and provide solutions to issues concerning water.

The WWF examines global water issues and engages a wide range of stakeholders. It exerts great influence on framing the discussion on water due to its scope and magnitude, as well as the publication of statement documents produced during ministerial meetings and high-level assemblies.

Japan hosted the 2003 WWF3 in Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, drawing 24,000 participants (6,000 from abroad) from 182 countries and 43 international organizations. JIRCAS, for its part, organized a booth exhibit (in English and in French) for the first time at the WWF6 in Marseilles, France last March 2012.

Regarding future events, the introduction of water indices to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), will be discussed at the World Water Summit in Budapest, Hungary in October 2013. The next WWF7, on the other hand, will be held in Daegu, Korea in April 2015. This writer currently serves as a Governor of the World Water Council (WWC), an organizing body of the WWF.

The International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) has a representative status with a proven track record of more than half century as a platform for discussing the future of irrigation and drainage in the world. The International Executive Council, the ICID's decision-making body, meets every year to discuss managerial affairs. Working groups within subordinate organizations, meanwhile, discuss wide-ranging issues on irrigation and drainage from the aspect of policy, science and technology. Similar to the WWC's efforts with the WWF but focused more on agriculture water management, the ICID will be hosting the first World Irrigation Forum (WIF) in Mardin, Turkey in October this year and once every three years thereafter. It invites multi-stakeholders such as farmers and their water users' group, NPOs and citizens, policy makers, experts and administrators to deepen the discussion. JIRCAS participates by actively disseminating the results and outcomes of research and technology development on agricultural water management from a global perspective.



ICID-CIID

Logos of the WWC/WWF and the ICID

Kazumi Yamaoka
Research Strategy Office

JIRCAS's R&D Network in Southeast Asia

JIRCAS has been implementing regional research collaborations as part of Japanese overseas technical cooperation activities in Southeast Asia. Significant economic development is taking place as evidenced by some countries having per capita income well above those in more developed nations. However, poverty alleviation through agricultural development remains a major challenge in other countries. Economic disparity is a problem not only among countries but also within each country especially between urban and rural areas.

To overcome the complicated technical challenges facing agriculture in an economically diverse region, it is crucial to have good coordination with research institutes, universities and policy planning agencies, among other organizations.

Understanding the importance of information sharing and synergy, JIRCAS established the Southeast Asia Liaison Office at the premises of the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in Bangkok, Thailand in order to expand its R&D network in the region.

Bangkok is a regional hub in Asia and the Pacific. It is also the capital of Thailand, which is one of the world's major food producers. Many other international organizations involved in agriculture have assigned experts and established offices in Bangkok.

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (APAARI) is an association of agricultural research organizations in the region with 21 regular member institutions (including JIRCAS) and 38 other members. The APAARI Secretariat is based in Bangkok and JIRCAS has been cooperating with APAARI to strengthen inter-regional and inter-institutional cooperation since its establishment. Dr. Masa Iwanaga, JIRCAS President, is currently Vice-Chairman of APAARI's Executive Committee.

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) is an emerging economic area in Asia bound together by the Mekong River. GMS consists of six countries (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam). In 1992, with assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB), the six GMS countries participated in an economic cooperation program aimed to enhance economic relations among the countries. ADB's Thailand Resident Mission in Bangkok strongly supports the GMS programs. JIRCAS has joined the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA, established in 2002), which is a mechanism for agricultural cooperation in the GMS.

The 10th annual meeting of the WGA was held on 2-4 April 2013 at Xiang Khouang, Lao PDR. The major topic was "Facilitating Pro-poor Green Value Chains in the GMS." At the meeting, JIRCAS introduced its project activities titled "Establishment of sustainable and independent farm household economy in the rural areas of

Indochina" in Lao PDR and "Development of agricultural technologies in developing countries to respond to climate change" in Vietnam.

Sago palm has a very high starch yield potential, making it an important food source. It also plays an important role in environmental protection because it can grow in underutilized swamps and wetlands thereby providing less competition with other crops for land and water use. Sago palm can contribute to food security and to poverty alleviation in an eco-friendly manner. To promote research, utilization, conservation and sustainable development of sago palm, the Regional Sago Network for Asia and the Pacific (SNAP) was established at the expert consultation meeting organized by FAO on 21- 22 March 2013 at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO RAP) in Bangkok. JIRCAS joined the meeting as one of the inaugural SNAP members and intends to contribute to SNAP activities by sharing technical information with other members and by seeking new research opportunities.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is another UN organization based in Bangkok. The Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) is a subsidiary body of ESCAP. CAPSA's goal is to reduce poverty and enhance food security in Asia and the Pacific by promoting sustainable agriculture. JIRCAS joined the 9th Session of the Governing Council of CAPSA on 14-15 February 2013. JIRCAS also contributed to CAPSA's SATNET Asia Network by providing technical information on best practices for sustainable agriculture.

JIRCAS will strengthen its regional R&D network so that its collaborative research activities in developing regions can achieve best performance, despite limited resources, by building well-coordinated relationships with other organizations working in the same field.



JIRCAS also expands its network by organizing international workshops. Photo shows participants of the international workshop titled "Carbon sequestration in soils through farm land management - The latest world researches and relevancy in Southeast Asia -" held last 6-7 December 2012 in Bangkok.

Tomohide Sugino
Research Strategy Office

Collaboration with FAO-RAP and AFSIS in Food Supply and Demand Analysis

Food supply and demand analysis in ASEAN countries

Cambodia and Laos, with their vast agricultural lands, abundant water and inexpensive labor resources, have been attracting broad attention as the economic integration of ASEAN countries starts in 2015. However, poverty and undernourishment are still serious issues in both countries. JIRCAS's Information Analysis Program (Program D) has been studying the future trends of agricultural supply-demand balance in those countries using an econometric model since 2010. This Program D activity has been expanded through collaboration with the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-RAP), the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), and the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan.

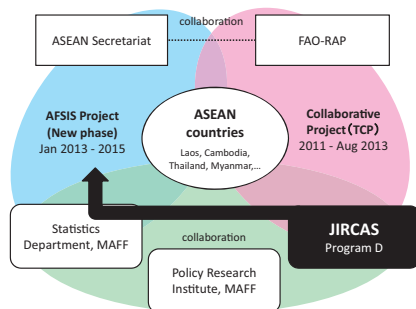


Figure 1. Collaborative relationship for food supply-demand analysis in ASEAN countries

Joint study with FAO-RAP

Program D has collaborated with FAO-RAP and the governments of Cambodia and Laos based on a joint study agreement under a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) since 2011. FAO-RAP implemented the following projects, namely, statistical data collection for Asian countries (the Regional Data Exchange System: RDES, 2001-2007), and food supply-balance projection by an econometric model called ASEAN Model (2003-2008), with funding provided by MAFF Japan. The TCP facility projects in Cambodia and Laos utilize the outputs derived from these projects.



Figure 2. Screenshot of Program D's webpage, showing output of a joint study with FAO-RAP (link: <http://jircas-d.job.affrc.go.jp/Ver-1/english/>)

Collaboration with AFSIS

AFSIS, with financial support from MAFF Japan, has been gathering and providing agricultural information since 2003, based on the agreement at the "First Meeting of the ASEAN Agriculture and Forestry Ministers and the Ministers of the People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea." AFSIS has now become one of the major data sources, along with RDES, for performing food supply-demand analysis in ASEAN countries. In 2013, Program D started collaborating with AFSIS and began to share methodologies of the econometric model among statisticians of the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry in all ASEAN countries. The methodologies accumulated from studies in Cambodia and Laos are becoming recognized as a basic and standardized framework of food supply-demand projection by ASEAN statisticians.



Photo 1. Providing know-how to statisticians of ASEAN countries (AFSIS workshop in Thailand, 2013)

Collaboration in the future

Joint workshops with JIRCAS, FAO-RAP and AFSIS were held in July 2013 in Thailand. Program D reported the outputs of projection analysis for Cambodia and Laos, and provided research results on model building to participants from all ASEAN countries. Program D cooperates not only with FAO-RAP and AFSIS, but also with the Policy Research Institute of MAFF (PRIMAFF) Japan and the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), a subsequent project of RDES. Partnerships with various institutes and projects are expected to promote synergy among its activities and make food supply-demand analysis more meaningful and useful.

Eiichi Kusano
Research Strategy Office

JIRCAS TODAY

○ **Recent JIRCAS Visitors**

* From Mozambique and Brazil

Mozambique’s Agriculture Minister José Pacheco, together with some 40 ProSAVANA-JBM delegates, visited and toured the facilities on April 3 (Wed).

The visit was part of activities under the “Triangular Cooperation for Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannah in Mozambique,” also known as the “ProSAVANA-JBM (Japan-Brazil-Mozambique) Program” which counts JIRCAS as a participating member-institute.

JIRCAS President Masa Iwanaga delivered a welcome speech. This was followed by a presentation introducing JIRCAS - its organizational structure, main programs, and ongoing research activities.



The visitors watch the presentation (JIRCAS overview).



JIRCAS President Masa Iwanaga with Minister José Pacheco and delegation

* From the Peruvian Embassy

Peru’s Ambassador to Japan Elard Escala and two others visited and toured JIRCAS on April 11 (Thu).

President Masa Iwanaga and Vice President Masami Yasunaka welcomed the group. After a discussion concerning ongoing research projects at JIRCAS, the group was given a tour of the research center.



Photo session with Peruvian Embassy officials



Peruvian Ambassador Elard Escala listens to JIRCAS Vice President Masami Yasunaka.

* From Thailand

Thirteen officials from Thailand’s Agricultural Research Development Agency and the Rice Department,

Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, visited JIRCAS on April 12 (Fri).

After the welcome speech by President Masa Iwanaga, the visitors were shown an overview of JIRCAS, followed by a presentation on collaborative research with the Agricultural Research Development Agency of Thailand and its relationship with the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).



Visitors from Thailand pose for a group photo outside the main building entrance.

* From Southern Africa

Seven embassy officials of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member-countries in Japan visited JIRCAS on May 20 (Mon).

President Masa Iwanaga welcomed the officials. This was followed by a presentation introducing JIRCAS and its programs, particularly ongoing research activities in Africa.



Embassy officials of SADC member-countries pose with JIRCAS President Masa Iwanaga.

○ **JIRCAS’s Contributions to the TICAD V Agenda**

* TICAD V Pre-event Workshop

The fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) Pre-event Workshop was held on May 31 (Fri) at the Ichijo Hall, Yayoi Auditorium, the University of Tokyo with the theme “New stages of Agricultural Research in Africa.” It was attended by 168

people from within and outside Japan. The participants diligently discussed the following programs:

- Session 1: CGIAR Research for African Agricultural Development
- Session 2: JIRCAS Research Activities in Africa and General Discussion

The workshop offered a great opportunity to exchange opinions on agricultural research and its impacts while discussing cooperation between JIRCAS and related international organizations to increase food production for the African region.



Participants of the pre-event workshop

*** JIRCAS Booth at the TICAD V Official Side Events**

JIRCAS presented its research activities in Africa at its designated booth at the TICAD V Exhibition Hall (Pacifico Yokohama Convention Center 5F) on May 31 - June 3 (Fri-Mon).



JIRCAS's exhibit booth at TICAD V

*** TICAD V Pre-event Seminar**

On May 26 (Sun) at JICA Yokohama, JIRCAS co-organized a seminar with the theme "Agricultural technical cooperation aimed at environmental protection and improving lives." Project Leader Fujio Nagumo of the Crop, Livestock and Environment Division presented his topic titled "Is it possible to introduce conservation agriculture in West Africa? Initiatives in Ghana and Burkina Faso" at the seminar.



Mr. Fujio Nagumo gives a lecture on 'conservation agriculture'.

*** Interview with the President of Mozambique**

On June 2 (Sun), Chairman Yohei Sasakawa of the Nippon Foundation and President Masa Iwanaga of JIRCAS had a meeting with President Armando Guebuza of Mozambique. President Iwanaga shared his views about the importance of agricultural technology development during the meeting.



JIRCAS President Masa Iwanaga (left) exchanges opinions with Mozambique President Armando Guebuza (right)

*** Special Lecture by the President of the Republic of Tunisia**

The President of the Republic of Tunisia, Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, visited the University of Tsukuba- Bunkyo School Building, Tokyo Campus on June 3 (Mon) as a guest speaker for a special lecture. The special lecture was co-organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia in Japan, the University of Tsukuba, and JIRCAS. President Marzouki exchanged opinions with the co-organizers and its representatives, including JIRCAS President Masa Iwanaga, prior to the lecture.



Roundtable conference with Tunisian President Marzouki (3rd from left, across the table) and JIRCAS President Iwanaga (2nd from right)

*** Official Side Event Seminar**

On June 3 (Mon), an official side event seminar was held with the theme “CARD-An Innovative Attempt toward Food Security and Agricultural Development in Africa-.” The latest activity reports and visions for the future were reported and discussed during the meeting by the CARD Secretariat and related countries. JIRCAS President Masa Iwanaga reported that steady progress has been made toward achieving the objective of CARD.

The Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) was established during TICAD IV in 2008 as a new international framework initiated by Japan in support of the efforts to double rice production in Africa. JIRCAS is making an active contribution as a member of the steering committee.



President Iwanaga speaks at the official side event seminar.

○ Upcoming Events

*** 2013 Japan International Award for Young Agricultural Researchers**

The commendation ceremony of the 2013 Japan International Award for Young Agricultural Researchers will be held at the U Thant International Conference Hall, the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan on November 20 (Wed). This annual award is organized and presented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan. Three outstanding non-Japanese researchers - under age 40, belonging to a non-Japanese research institute or university, and engaged in research and development in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related industries in developing countries - will receive testimonials and cash prizes. They will also present their research achievements at the commendation ceremony. JIRCAS serves as award secretariat and handles the nomination process and the

staging of the commendation ceremony.

Nominations for this year have closed last June 14. For the announcement of winners and details about the commendation ceremony (registration procedures, etc.) please check the JIRCAS website at <http://www.jircas.affrc.go.jp/index.html>.



Last year's winners together with members of the selection committee and other officials

*** 2013 JIRCAS International Symposium**

The 2013 JIRCAS International Symposium will be held at the U Thant International Conference Hall, the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan on November 20-21 (Wed pm- Thu).

JIRCAS is the only research institute in Japan to undertake comprehensive experimental research for the technological advancement of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related industries in tropical and subtropical zones of developing regions. JIRCAS has been hosting the international symposium every year since 1994, with invited participants attending from within and outside Japan. Details of the 2013 JIRCAS International Symposium (program, registration procedures, etc.) will be published at <http://www.jircas.affrc.go.jp/index.html>.



JIRCAS International Symposium 2012 participants