



- Letter from the Program Director
- Milestones
- Latest Publications
- Upcoming in April/May
- Feature Story
- Hub Round-Up

Dear Friends,

It's been a busy start to 2014 for all of us working in AAS, with a focus on confirming direction for the year and strengthening our capacity to execute. At global level our Plan of Work and Budget for 2014 was approved by the Consortium Office in February and each of the country teams has now completed detailed activity plans to guide execution of this work. Many of these activities are of course now well underway and this Newsletter highlights some of the key milestones and publications completed so far, together with some key events in each hub.

We also completed the AAS report for 2013 and have submitted this for review by the Consortium Office. This report highlighted the large body of research outputs generated during the year, and the early indicators of progress in delivering outcomes along the program's three scaling pathways. The full report will be available on the AAS web site once it has been approved by the Consortium Office.

The Program Leadership Team (PLT) and Program Oversight Panel (POP) both met in February. The PLT focused on steps to strengthen execution and strategic positioning of the program. They agreed top science priorities for communications investment in 2014. These cover the program's science framework and our work on productivity, gender, governance and nutrition. The POP focused on reviewing performance in 2013 and ensuring that the program is preparing effectively for the External Review that will be take place later this year.

While we are heavily focused on execution in 2014, we have also started to think through how the program can best understand possible futures for aquatic agricultural systems and the people who depend upon them, and in turn the implications for our research. To help us design this work we convened a workshop in Penang on 17-18 March that brought together a small group of program staff from Bioversity, IWMI and WorldFish, and specialists with broad experience in foresight from The CGIAR (Consortium Office and CCAFS), the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, the Institute of Development Studies, and Ecoagriculture Partners. This was an inspirational discussion and the group will now work together over the coming weeks to complete detailed design of a foresight study to be conducted in 2014-16. This will be a key resource as we work on the detailed design and implementation of the program for its next phase from 2017 onwards.

Thanks to everyone who has helped in making these various events possible in the past few months, and please get in touch at aas@cgiar.org if you have any questions on the program or feedback on the newsletter.



Best regards
Patrick Dugan
Program Director

Milestones

- 2013 report submitted to the Consortium Office
- 2014 Plan of Work and Budget approved by the Consortium Office
- Participatory action research (PAR) on field crops initiated in Bangladesh
- Community immersion of all AAS teams in the Philippines
- Assessment of agrobiodiversity completed in Barotse Hub, Zambia
- A workshop on 'Sustainable farming for nutrition and income: Marine resource management and cross scale governance theory of change for Malaita Hub' was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands
- Participatory Action Research design meeting held for AAS Cambodia
- Program Leadership Team (11-14 February) and Program Oversight Panel (26-27 February) meetings held in Penang
- Foresight study design workshop convened in Penang (17-18 March)



Latest Publications

- [Tonle Sap Scoping Study](#)
- [Increased production of small fish in wetlands combats micronutrient deficiencies in Bangladesh](#)
- [Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy](#)
- [Polyculture of carps and mola in ponds and ponds connected to rice fields](#)
- [Governance of aquatic agricultural systems: Analyzing representation, power and accountability](#)

Upcoming in April/May

- Gender and Development Fair and Symposium in Bangladesh (8 – 10 April)
- Biodiversity household surveys conducted in Philippines
- Community Life Competence Process training for members of focal communities in the Malaita Hub, Solomon Islands
- Participatory video being piloted in Cambodia as a tool to empower communities and support the PAR process in Cambodia



Feature Story

Inspiring change for rural women in Bangladesh through the use of agricultural biodiversity

In the program's focal countries women's influence in society often seems to be restricted to the boundaries of her home. But a closer look, especially within the rural communities, reveals they have multi-tier responsibilities within and beyond the confines of their house and home garden, making decisions about which crops and varieties to grow, eat, and sell. These women farmers play a significant role in managing agricultural biodiversity. Dorothy Chandrabalan, Programme Specialist, Bioversity International, shares the early findings from the program's agricultural biodiversity baseline assessment within communities in Southern Bangladesh.



HUB ROUND-UP

Bangladesh

Two gender workshops have been held in Bangladesh in the last two months, with 'Enhancing the gender equitable potential of aquaculture technologies: sharing lessons' held in early February, and 'Inspiring Change: Institutionalizing gender in nutrition and agriculture interventions' held in early March. [Click here](#) to read more about AAS gender work.

Cambodia

Following the Participatory Action Research design workshop held in mid-March the AAS Cambodia team piloted the process developed in two AAS villages in Pursat province. The process was reviewed after two days in the field for modification and improvement. AAS Knowledge and Action Researchers also attended training on the 'Collaborating for Resilience Approach' (CORE) in India. The training brought together representatives from AAS partners to share their experiences on Participatory Action Research and learn about the CORE approach.

Philippines

The VisMin hub team has continued to work with communities to revise and start implementation of their action plans and the research agenda within these. In conjunction with this work an agricultural biodiversity assessment, has been conducted in four key communities. Similarly an assessment was conducted of conditions in the program's focal communities affected by Typhoon Yolanda with a view to identifying how the program can best align with the Government's Post-Yolanda Rehabilitation program.

Solomon Islands

In Malaita focal communities have begun implementation of activities outlined in their Community Action Plans, and at hub scale participatory action research on marine resource management is also being undertaken with communities in East Are Are and Langalanga Lagoon. In Western Province diagnosis is continuing involving targeted stakeholder consultations by sector, including community leaders. The first of these will focus on community based resource management.

Zambia

A Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) capacity development training session for program staff was held in mid-February along with implementing partner Caritas. This is a first step towards integration of

GTA into the program's 'farm book' intervention that aims to encourage women and men farmers to monitor their inputs and outputs from farming activities as a step towards improving productivity. [Click here](#) to read more about AAS gender work.

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