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Dear Friends,

Happy New Year, and welcome to the Year of the Horse! As the Chinese New Year celebrations get underway here in Penang I'm delighted to launch the first edition of the AAS Newsletter. We intend to use the Newsletter to keep you up-to-date with the progress of the program, and look forward to receiving your feedback. Please feel free to share with other colleagues in the spirit of partnership that is so important to the work of AAS.

At the start of the New Year I'd also like to thank you all for your contributions to the Program over the course of 2013. It was a busy year where we moved ahead on a number of fronts, but in particular with implementation in Bangladesh, the Solomon Islands and Zambia, and completed roll out in Cambodia and the Philippines. We've also generated a large body of research outputs in 2013 and we'll highlight these in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Listening to feedback during the hub review meeting earlier this month I was struck by the very positive feedback from the community engagement in our hubs. While it is still early days, the strength of this feedback bodes well for the engagement and capacities that the program is helping to nurture, and in turn for the sustainability of the outcomes we are helping to achieve.

2014 is of course now well underway and it's going to be another busy one for the program. In line with the processes being put in place for extension of the CRPs into 2015 and 2016 we'll be developing a transition proposal for submission to the Consortium Office in April. We'll then follow that towards the middle of the year with an external review of the program. That will provide a great opportunity to take stock of progress in our first three years of operation, and benefit from objective external commentary and advice as we prepare for 2015 onwards.

In preparation for the review we'll not only be moving ahead with our research in each of the focal countries, but also sharpening our collective thinking on the program's Intermediate Development Outcomes and the targets we will seek to achieve for each of these. As in 2013 we'll also continue to invest strongly in our gender transformative approach and knowledge sharing and learning, together with increased focus on partnerships and capacity development. So we've got a lot on, but I'm sure that with your continued efforts and strong partnerships, AAS will continue to develop well over the course of the year.

Thank you again and please do get in touch at worldfishcenter@cgiar.org if you have any questions on the program, or feedback on the newsletter.



Best regards
Patrick Dugan
Program Director

2013 Milestones



- [Philippines](#) and [Cambodia](#) Hubs complete rollout
- [Solomon Islands](#) completes community visioning and action planning in [Malaita](#) Hub
- All Hubs have completed designs
- Annual review and reflection workshops completed in all Hubs
- [Annual cross-Hub review and reflection workshop completed](#)
- Social Gender Analysis studies begin
- Farmer-led research begins in [Khulna](#)

- Communities implement action plans in the [Barotse](#) and [Malaita](#) Hubs
- Fish value chain initiative in [Barotse](#) completed first phase of value chain study and participatory planning
- High level meetings in Ghana lay the ground for exploring potential AAS programs in 2014

Latest Publications

- [Tonle sap scoping report](#)
- [Collaborating for resilience in complex aquatic resource commons: Lessons for policy and practice](#)
- [A Governance analysis of the Barotse Floodplain System, Zambia: Identifying obstacles and opportunities](#)
- [Decision support for water management for integrating aquaculture in small-scale irrigation systems: A case for the Chingale catchment in Malawi](#)
- [Improved fisheries management in the Barotse Floodplain of Zambia - An urgent call for action](#)

Upcoming in January/February

- Re-engaging with communities to plan work under initiatives in Cambodia
- Re-engaging with communities to re-visit the community action plan in VisMin Hub after Yolanda typhoon
- Myanmar scoping mission
- Finalizing community research agreements in Solomon Islands to guide participatory action research with farmers and fishers.



Program Documents

[Proceedings of the Zambia AAS Annual Reflection Workshop at Senanga Safari Lodge, 4-7 Nov 2013](#)

HUB ROUND-UP

Bangladesh

Theories of Change workshops were completed and are helping define the key areas of research for the program in [Bangladesh](#). In 16 pilot villages where AAS is engaging, new varieties of vegetable crops, fodder and winter crops are being tested through farmer-led participatory action research. Journal notes, photographs and videos are recording the impact of trials and the research method.

Cambodia

In [Tonle Sap](#) the program design was completed, producing a strategic framework with three key initiatives - water quality and health, land and water management and livelihood diversification. These are fully supported and endorsed by Hub stakeholders. A Knowledge Fair was held to bring together facilitators from all communities to share stories of change from first implementation of action plans. The next steps in Cambodia are to begin implementation and further develop initiatives and complete Theories of Change workshops.

Philippines

[VisMin Hub](#) completed rollout and design and now has a strategic framework with three key initiatives - sustainable and environment friendly productivity improvement, increased equitable and sustainable incomes including market access, and enhanced and effective governance for natural resource management. The plan is supported and endorsed by Hub stakeholders and implementation will begin in January when the AAS team, with partners revisit the community plans and consider adjustments in the action plans as an aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda. A theory of change workshop and knowledge fair are also being planned for the first quarter of 2014. Early outcomes from the initial work in 2013 have emerged mainly in abaca rehabilitation and coconut pest management.

Solomon Islands

In [Malaita Hub](#), community action plans that were developed in July and August 2013 were implemented rapidly and with enthusiasm from the communities with the engagement of resource persons in the Hub who were willing to share their knowledge. The Malaita Hub staff and stakeholders completed an annual reflection workshop to understand the progress of the program rollout and how to continue to support the community

action plans. The Western Province team completed the Hub level Stakeholder Consultation Workshop. This is one of the last steps of the scoping phase of program rollout where Hub level stakeholders - including local government and NGOs - come together to identify a common vision of success, a development challenge and commit to working on this together.

Zambia

The [Barotse Hub](#) in Mongu completed their annual reflection workshop with stakeholders from government, community and NGOs. The community has begun to do research on flood risk management and value chains, which are two key priorities. There has been strong interest and good participation by crucial stakeholders such as the Barotse Royal Establishment (the traditional leaders) and the local and provincial government. The priority focus in 2014 will be building local partnerships further and reinforcing practices and systems of knowledge sharing and learning.

Ghana scoping mission

AAS and the [CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish](#) undertook a scoping mission with the NEPAD Agency 'Rural Futures' programme to the Lower Volta, Ghana in October. The Rural Futures program was interested in private sector opportunities and capacity building, particularly to improve opportunities for the youth in rural areas. The team had high-level meetings at the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture as well as meetings with the World Bank funded West African Regional Fisheries Program, FAO, USAID, Danida, the Water Research Institute, IWMI, CABI, AGRA, FARA, CRS, EPA, fish farmers associations and communities. The aquaculture industry is at an exciting stage of growth, agriculture is developing and there is an interesting national 'Livelihoods Empowerment Action Programme', which could be an opportunity to work with the poorest of the poor. The report is now being reviewed before further discussions with 'Rural Futures' on how to proceed in a partnership in Ghana.

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