



Program Partnerships



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Aquatic
Agricultural
Systems

Introduction

Effective partnership is central to the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agriculture Systems (AAS). We recognize that many organizations are working to improve the lives of people living in aquatic agricultural systems, and together they spend hundreds of millions of dollars there each year. For the AAS Program to add value in this complex institutional environment, we therefore focus on where and how the program's science insights can support the work of our partners, and where the convening and catalytic roles we play can foster coalitions that, collectively, have a greater ability to deliver more effective development actions. Working in this way we aim to leverage the CGIAR's investment in aquatic agricultural systems to help achieve impact at scale.

The program has integrated this partnership approach into all aspects of the program's design, implementation and governance arrangements. A diverse range of national, regional and international partners participated in the program's design and national partners have identified priority issues and potential focal hubs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Philippines, the Solomon Islands and Zambia. Importantly key NGO partners are active members of the AAS Program Leadership Team (PLT). As we now move to implementation this early focus on high quality partnerships has continued and will develop further in the coming years. The present brief summarizes our approach at different geographical levels, highlights the role of partners

"One of the things I find most innovative is the way WorldFish and the AAS Program approach partnerships. I like the steady progress and the intent of the relationship between CARE and WorldFish. The problems we are trying to address are complex change processes and no one organization can tackle them alone."

Andrea Rodericks, CARE.

in achieving impact at scale, and provides short summaries of selected partners to illustrate their role in the program.

Partner engagement

The program works with a wide range of partner institutions, amongst which two groups are of particular importance. **Core institutions** have unique mandates and capacities essential to the success of the program. These partners include national government agencies with explicit mandates for coordinating agricultural research and development and/or provincial government structures responsible for coordinating development in program hubs. In some cases, core institutions may include civil society forums and private sector associations mandated to coordinate stakeholder representation in policy making. These partners play a central role in program design, implementation and coordination.

Key implementing partners are essential for success because of their capacity and established track record in research, capacity development, or implementation in the AAS Program. They are aligned with the research-in-development approach of the program, including our commitment to gender, knowledge sharing and learning, and capacity development, and are prepared to engage significant staff and financial resources, including in scaling out learning from the program. Reflecting the program's focus on place, these key partners include local and national organizations that work in the program's focal hubs, such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh, Kastom Gaden Association (KGA) in the Solomon Islands, and Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust (GART) in Zambia. Internationally they include development NGOs working in AAS such as CARE, SAVE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Concern. They also include leading research and capacity development institutes such as the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), the International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA) and several universities. Key implementing partners play important roles in program planning and implementation; including through participation in national program teams, and in the program's global leadership team (Box 1).

Box 1. International NGOs

CARE and CRS have joined the Program Leadership Team (PLT) with a view to providing a broader perspective to the work of the program, and to foster linkages with the experience and expertise available through the international NGO community. With programs totaling over \$1 billion dollars annually CARE and CRS reach more that 150 million people each year.

In agriculture, CRS works with local partners in over 40 countries to improve family well-being. Through agro-economic development, environmental stewardship and better health and nutrition, CRS seeks to strengthen the capacity of local agencies and farm communities to take control of their own development. CRS brings technical expertise in agriculture and social development, as well as considerable operational experience and policy influence.

CARE promotes innovative solutions and advocates global responsibility to eradicate poverty. Guided by the aspirations of local communities, and with a strong focus on women’s empowerment, CARE facilitates lasting change by strengthening capacity for self-help, providing economic opportunity, delivering relief in emergencies, influencing policy decisions at all levels, and addressing discrimination in all its forms.

Making partnerships work nationally

In the program’s focal countries a full range of partners have been engaged in program design. For example in Zambia these include core institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) through the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute, Department of Fisheries, Department of Agriculture and the Provincial Agricultural Coordination Office; and the Barotse Royal Establishment. Similarly key implementing partners in Zambia include GART, University of Zambia, Peoples’ Participation

Services, CRS, Caritas and Concern Worldwide. All of these partners have engaged closely in the scoping of the program at a provincial level in collaboration with participating communities, and are playing a key role in the design and implementation of the program’s detailed agenda as it is developed. Some are partnering actively in research, while others are managing development projects through which the program will scale out. Still others are facilitating links to the wider development policy arena. A similar approach has been taken in Bangladesh and is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Partner engagement in Bangladesh

| Partners | How we are working together |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Core institutions | |
| Government | All CGIAR activities in Bangladesh, including the AAS Program, are defined and conducted with the consent and engagement of Government. The program has been designed to support policy initiatives in key areas of concern for aquatic agricultural systems. Technical specialists from line agencies are working with the program in collaboration with national research partners and NGOs to deliver farm-level technical support. Outputs from the program will contribute to the development of related policies at national level. |
| NARS | The Bangladesh National Agricultural Research System has over 300 scientists and a large number of farms and research sites covering every ecotype in the country. The Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) is the apex body for this system and coordinates all agriculture research activities. All major technological research in the AAS Program is being pursued in close partnership with BARC institutes, in particular the agriculture, rice, livestock and fisheries research institutes. The Local Government Engineering Department of the Ministry of Local Government (LGED) is responsible for rural infrastructure development particularly for small scale irrigation, feeder roads, many small wetlands and local markets. The program is working with LGED to accompanying their local infrastructure and wetlands programs, and cooperate on market and value chain programming. |
| Key implementing partners | |
| National NGOs | Bangladesh has several of the world’s largest NGOs who engage directly with rural communities across the country. CGIAR is already working closely with many of these partners including BRAC, Shushilan and Ranjpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS), and we are working to expand this collaboration in focal hubs and as we scale out program learning. |
| International NGOs | SAVE, CARE, and other International NGOs work at scale providing a range of services to millions of people in Bangladesh. They are known for their ability to manage very large interventions; working in almost every area of development. Each of these NGOs is managing approximately \$40 million dollars a year in programming in Bangladesh and approximately a billion dollars worldwide per year. Through these NGO partnerships we will work to scale out program learning more widely in the hubs and at national level. |
| Universities | Bangladesh has a strong university research community and the AAS Program is working closely with these partners on specific research issues. Initially the program is working with the Bangladesh Agriculture University, Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi Universities to conduct research individually and through the Krishi Foundation and the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum who coordinate agriculture and fisheries research respectively on behalf of a consortia of agriculture universities. |



Box 2. Building partnerships in AAS hubs

Through program roll-out we work at hub level to build partnerships, motivation and coherence around tackling a compelling development challenge. As part of this process a stakeholder consultation workshop serves to share our philosophy and approach and gauge stakeholder priorities and motivations. During this stage of work different stakeholder groups map partner networks in each hub. They are asked to map out their collective view of who is working with whom on AAS issues and then to identify where network changes (for example the need for stronger working relationships) would help a collective effort in tackling the hub development challenge. These maps are then compiled to identify the organizations that stakeholders see as the most central to efforts to better cope and take advantage of the hub development challenge. Figure 1 shows the composite map drawn for the Barotse hub. The largest nodes are the ones that stakeholders see as the most central to tackling hub development challenge. Nodes are also color-coded according to organization type. As shown in Figure 1, the most central nodes are predominantly government organizations and the most central the Provincial Agriculture Coordinator Office (PACO) followed by the Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) and the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE).

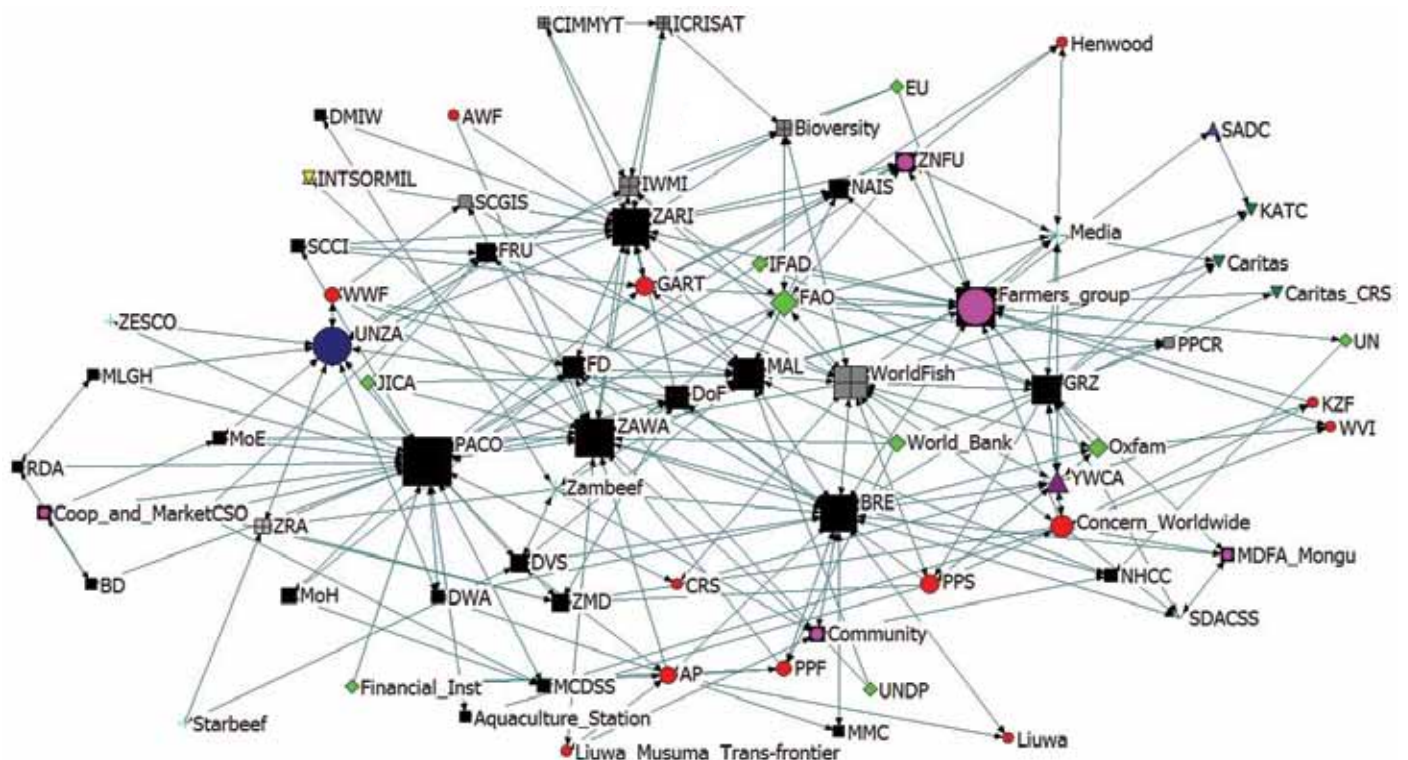


Figure 1. Composite network map compiled from group work in the Stakeholder Consultation Workshop for the Barotse Hub in Zambia



Partnerships and impact at scale

To achieve impact at scale the program will work with partners along three distinct pathways. The first pathway concerns our direct engagement with partners in specific research sites in selected program hubs. The second is the more extensive achievement of benefits through the learning alliances and impact networks that the program will develop in these hubs. By partnering with other institutions working in the hubs we will expand the program's learning and impact through their projects and networks. The third pathway pursues larger reduction in poverty by expanding program networks nationally, regionally and globally, as well as by working through these networks to foster the dissemination and wider adoption of the learning, methods and technologies harnessed through the program. To achieve this, we are building learning alliances in focal countries, and working with partners internationally to build a global coalition for knowledge-sharing and learning in AAS.

Achieving impact at scale along these three pathways will require careful investment in a range of research, partnerships, and knowledge-sharing and learning activities designed to facilitate the processes required to translate outputs into outcomes and outcomes into impacts. Each pathway will use specifically tailored knowledge-sharing and learning strategies to foster ownership and inclusion, raise awareness and understanding of program outcomes, and foster their adoption and institutionalization. In pursuing these pathways, the program recognizes the importance of both vertical scaling (institutionalization through policy, political, legal and other types of system change) and horizontal scaling (achieved through expansion, replication and collaboration). Our research is designed to build on evidence to stimulate the policies and other systematic changes required for vertical scaling, and our partnership strategy provides the means to do this through replication and collaboration.

“CRS warmly welcomes partnerships with research institutions. We believe that working together in multi-stakeholder learning alliances accelerates innovation at all levels. We see learning together through AAS as an exceptional opportunity for resolving previously intractable problems that can help improve our global agricultural programming.”

Rupert Best, CRS.

With communities, changing lives

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The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems is a multi-year research initiative launched in July 2011. It is designed to pursue community-based approaches to agricultural research and development that target the poorest and most vulnerable rural households in aquatic agricultural systems. Led by WorldFish, the program is partnering with diverse organizations working at local, national and global levels to help achieve impacts at scale. For more information, visit aas.cgiar.org

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