



2015 GAFSP Knowledge Forum: Summary Notes

**June 10-11, 2015
IFAD Headquarters, Rome**

INTRODUCTION

1. The second GAFSP Knowledge Forum was held on June 10-11, 2015 at the IFAD Headquarters in Rome. About 40 project team leaders and representatives (list of participants are provided in **Annex-1**) from seven Supervising Entities (SEs)¹ participated at the Knowledge Forum, which was organized by the GAFSP Coordination Unit (CU) in cooperation with IFAD. A group picture of the Forum participants is provided in **Annex-2**.
2. The objectives of the Knowledge Forum were to: (i) exchange experience and “how to” knowledge on GAFSP projects for improving efficiency of delivery and increasing impact on beneficiaries; (ii) contribute to current processes underway to strengthen the overall GAFSP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and related project systems; and (iii) capture and highlight emerging results from GAFSP-financed projects to help demonstrate GAFSP’s value-added for client countries and donors.
3. The agenda of the Knowledge Forum is provided in **Annex-3**. The discussions at the Knowledge Forum focused on GAFSP specific elements of projects, beyond regular operations of the respective SEs. The project team leaders and representatives were asked to think critically about GAFSP on monitoring and evaluation, performance indicators, public-private partnerships including what strengths and challenges team leaders have experienced, and what changes could be made to increase the impact, speed, or strength of the Program moving forward. The discussions resulted in several concrete follow-up actions.

GAFSP PROJECT PORTFOLIO

4. During the introductory session of the Knowledge Forum, the importance of project design and the need to secure quality at entry was emphasized so as to ensure better implementation of GAFSP projects. Better feasibility studies, including project site selection, and discussions on building trust with partners were amongst suggestions to improve project implementation. Participants raised a desire for a project preparation facility. The CU informed participants that the GAFSP Steering Committee (SC) is aware of this request that has also been expressed by SE representatives at SC meetings, and a way forward is being considered. At this juncture it was noted that such a facility would support preparation needs after a proposal has been awarded funding by the SC.
5. The Forum suggested that complete information on the GAFSP project portfolio be made available that would include project objectives, scope, gaps in the country, and level of investment needed to address the gaps. Participants highlighted the important role of GAFSP in poverty reduction and food security, while it addresses and weaves in cross-cutting themes in the projects, such as linkages between food security and climate-smart agriculture, gender’s role in nutrition, etc.
6. In addition, it was suggested that participation in future GAFSP Knowledge Forums be widened to include government representatives. Forum participants expressed interest in revisiting GAFSP M&E

¹ Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, FAO, IFAD, IFC, WFP and the World Bank. IDB was not able to attend.

requirements and reporting channels. They noted that GAFSP projects need to take into consideration the sustainability of its investments. Participants considered that it was important for the Program to explore opportunities to leverage different sources of financing via other trust funds, including IDA.

Proposed Actions

- Prepare a paper on the GAFSP project portfolio that includes project objectives, scope, gaps in the country, and level of investment needed to address the gaps, and share the informational paper with project leaders and SC. [CU]
- Look at options for broadening participation at the next Knowledge Forum, taking into account objectives, logistics and budget. [CU]

STORYBOARD

7. The CU presented a preliminary draft version of the 'Farmer Storyboard' for a video planned to be aired as part of the resource mobilization effort. The aim of the video is to present the farmer experience in terms of both public and private sectors and to show how GAFSP helps with all. It was suggested that the following items be included/described in the development of the next version of the Storyboard:

- Aggregation of production for access to markets;
- Linkages and complementarities in nutrition and well-being;
- Risk management in household, resilience, etc.;
- Linkages between GAFSP and development foundations;
- Delivery of results and development of country systems, which GAFSP is contributing towards;
- Non-linearity of farmer story; and
- Ensure that the storyboard presents a rich array for all farmers representing the broad reality of the farmer experience.

Proposed Action

- Develop the next version of the Farmer Storyboard, taking into consideration as appropriate and feasible the inputs provided at the 2015 Knowledge Forum. [CU]

GAFSP M&E FRAMEWORK

8. The current GAFSP M&E Framework along with Tier I, Tier II and Tier III indicators were discussed. Project team leaders shared their M&E experiences in GAFSP projects in Cambodia, Ethiopia and The Gambia. The following key points were highlighted in the discussion:
- The M&E working group to lay out distinctive objectives and reporting method of the Tier I, Tier II and Tier III indicators. The objective of Tier I, which is to set *ex-ante* GAFSP program goals, to be undertaken as a mutually exclusive exercise by the relevant M&E sub-groups. On the other hand, the objective of Tier II, which is to set output level indicators, to be reported after streamlining and harmonizing across projects.
 - Tier I indicators emphasizing income, undernourishment and poverty are too high level to be reported at the project level.
 - Tier II indicators underscore objectives, while project indicators are reported on activity level.
 - Standardizing and customizing of GAFSP project indicators to consider developing a standard format specific to each country in terms of presenting result framework.
 - There is a need to clarify issues such as attribution challenge, changes in household, livelihood aspect, behavioral changes, and market dimension.
 - GAFSP impact on food security or higher level indicators (linking to SDGs) is not clear. The Program needs to aim at describing changes in food security.
 - More emphasis needs to be given on cross-cutting themes such as gender.
 - Donors are keen to find out about the impact of every dollar invested in GAFSP, which is very important in the context of new funding for the Program.

Rapid Impact Evaluation²

9. The CU informed the Forum that the rapid impact evaluation (non-experimental impact evaluation) is a form of impact evaluation that is carried out under data and budget constraints. In pragmatic terms, a rapid impact evaluation should be understood as an evaluation that is carried out towards the end of the project, but will allow the derived impact to be attributed to the activities of the project. The CU further informed the Forum that the final evaluation studies (that each project is expected to have done anyway) should involve an evaluation expert with skills in quantitative methods who could “re-create” counterfactual scenarios using existing data and standard econometric methodologies. It was suggested that projects bid competitively for a local university, specialized consultant(s) or research firm for the above purpose; however, it is recommended that the projects share plans on rapid impact evaluation with the CU before calling for bids. The GAFSP awarded grant amount for each project covers the cost³ of the Rapid Impact Evaluation.

² For all GAFSP projects except for those that have been chosen to carry out in-depth Impact Evaluations

³ Indicative cost suggested in the GAFSP M&E Framework is \$50,000 per project

Proposed Actions

- Report to the GAFSP M&E Working Group on the suggestions and comments made at the 2015 Knowledge Forum including [CU]:
 - Focus on how to report back Tier II indicators to donors.
 - Research core indicators of SEs and focus on streamlining GAFSP indicators so that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, including if possible, with respect to outcome.
 - Research logical frameworks that are currently followed by AfDB, ADB and IFAD.
 - Re-define all GAFSP indicators in terms of input, activities, outputs and outcomes.
 - Revert to SE team leaders on validating the revised indicators
- Develop one-page template for SE team leaders to prepare human impact stories. [CU]

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

10. Closer linkages between the two GAFSP windows are actively being sought. IFC country managers from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya shared their experiences of projects that demonstrate public-private partnerships. The project team leaders were requested to flag possible investment opportunities for the Private Sector Window, which the Public Sector Window could leverage.
11. There was also a robust discussion on how to overcome challenges for public-private engagement. The average size of GAFSP Private Sector Window projects is relatively small in comparison to the GAFSP Public Sector Window projects. Participants expressed a need for the Private Sector Window to understand what the GAFSP Public Sector Window does, and vice versa. It was explained that it is challenging for IFC to step into a project that has been approved and is under implementation. SE representatives and team leaders reported that there is some skepticism on the part of some governments whenever there is discussion on private sector - protecting the interests of smallholder farmers has been raised by governments as an issue in the context of the private sector.

Proposed Actions

- Organize a half day learning event at the next GAFSP Knowledge Forum, where project team leaders from the GAFSP Public Sector Window would have the opportunity to understand private sector models. [Private Sector Window Secretariat]
- While preparing project concept notes (Public Sector Window), project team leaders would bring in IFC for inputs in the formulation of proposals for possible private sector participation. [SE team leaders]
- Strengthen private sector outreach such that private sector actors work directly with governments on GAFSP proposals. [Private Sector Window Secretariat]

PROJECTS WITH MORE THAN ONE SUPERVISING ENTITY

12. In general, when there are two Supervising Entities (SEs) for investments in GAFSP projects, the two components operate relatively independently. However, when there are investment and technical assistance (TA) components, the projects are expected to run in an integrated manner, which experience is demonstrating not always to be the case. It was noted that GAFSP projects with multiple SEs, especially one for investment and the other one for TA, require more coordination between them in terms of timing and sequencing TA and investment activities.
13. In GAFSP projects that have two SEs (one SE undertaking investment and other one TA), the key challenge is lack of clarity on the interdependency and interactions of investment and TA activities. Despite the fact that governments ultimately are the decision makers, they are not adequately informed about the roles and responsibilities of the two SEs undertaking investment and TA activities in the GAFSP projects. Clarity is needed at the design phase on whether the investment and TA components in projects would be implemented in an integrated manner or separately. Given the nature of the two components, implementation of investment is likely to take longer than TA activities.
14. The Forum recommended that one future role of the CU would be to inform and clarify GAFSP partners (SEs and government) on investment and TA activities and their coordination. It is important that governments take timely decisions and from the start of the project make it clear about what are investments and TA activities and which SEs would be undertaking those. Instead of having two separate proposals for the same project as is the current practice (one investment and the other one TA), it would be helpful to have only one proposal and one design for each project that would include investment and TA activities. It is very important to articulate the clear roles of SEs in the project proposal that is to be submitted to the GAFSP Steering Committee. This would provide greater integration between investment and TA activities. All partners should be clear about the above two components and the level of engagement between SEs from the start.

Project Restructuring

15. Project restructuring is possible after SC approval. It is important that all key partners engage with the relevant government on project restructuring. The Forum suggested that it would be helpful to develop lessons learned on project restructuring and share with governments and SEs. A business case needs to be prepared on whether one or two SEs are needed for ease of project implementation.

Proposed Actions

- Organize a meeting or teleconference of relevant SEs after each project proposal has been approved by the Steering Committee (SC). The purpose of this meeting/teleconference would be to make clear to SEs the decision of the SC and the roles (investment and TA activities) of the SEs in the project. [CU]
- Develop guidelines for identifying project SEs and the number of SEs. [CU]
- Project restructuring [CU]
 - Develop lessons learned from previously restructured GAFSP projects,
 - Share lessons learned with governments and SEs, and
 - Prepare business case on the need for more than one SE.

New Projects: Operational Challenges

16. Some of the key operational challenges discussed in the Forum are:

- The current two-step process for GAFSP project approval (preparation for submission of GAFSP proposal and internal preparation within SEs) is too lengthy. The internal process within SEs is essentially creating a new proposal/project concept note. Focus needs to be sharper on timing.
- Some countries have been frustrated due to multiple proposal submissions and rejections. The Forum suggested that the CU include very detailed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) feedback in its letter to governments so that they would know what to change in the next version of the project proposal.
- A suggestion was made for the SC to intervene at the country level to address political challenges.
- For supervision of TA activities, it was pointed out that adequate resources need to be made available to FAO.

Proposed Actions

- Shorten the time for GAFSP project approval by having the project proposal to GAFSP serve as concept note internally – assess the acceptability of this proposal by all the SEs. [CU]
- Organize outreach missions especially at project inception and mid-term point. The CU outreach missions to be more than once a year, subject to available budget. [CU]
- During project design phase, provide guidance based on GAFSP pillars and tiers. [CU]
- Include very detailed Technical Advisory Committee feedback in the CU letter to governments regarding the SC decision on submitted project proposals. [CU]

Demonstration of GAFSP Portal

17. CU demonstrated the GAFSP Portal (online platform) in the test environment to the Forum participants. Project team leaders expressed interest in the Portal and looked forward to its formal launch.

Proposed Action

- Share comments provided by project leaders with the World Bank Trustee FIF team. [CU]

Outcome of the Knowledge Forum Evaluation Survey

18. The CU conducted a brief survey at the end of each day during the Knowledge Forum to collect feedback from the participants. **Annex-4** shows tables summarizing the outcome of the survey by each session. The overall outcome of the survey corroborates active engagement of different stakeholders across the various sessions.

List of Participants at the GAFSP Knowledge Forum

	Entity	Name	Position	GAFSP Country
1	ADB	Raza Farrukh	Water Resources Specialist	Cambodia/STPD
2		Piseth Long	Senior Project Officer	Cambodia/EFAD
3		Mahfuzuddin Ahmed	Advisor/Practice Leader	Steering Committee
4	AfDB	Lewis Bangwe	Task Team Leader	
5		Mouldi Tarhouni	Chief Irrigation Officer	Mali
6		Samba Bocary Tounkara	Chief Fisheries Expert	Benin
7		Sheikh Javed Ahmed	Chief Water Resource Engineer	Kenya
8	FAO	Anna Lisa Noack	Investment Centre	Bangladesh
9		Enkhjargal Tumur Ochir	Officer Strategic Planning/Policy	Mongolia/Rome
10		Guy Evers	Deputy Dir. Investment Centre	Steering Committee
11		Hassen Ali	Representative to Ethiopia	Ethiopia
12		Jennifer Braun	Investment Centre	Bangladesh
13		Marc Moens	Sr. Livestock Officer	
14		Mariatou Njie	Sr. Operations Officer	The Gambia
15		Pamela Pozarny	Rural Sociologist	Ethiopia/Rome
16		Robert Allport	Rep. Programme Implementation	Kenya
17		Takayuki Hagiwara	Sr. Nat. Resources Mgt. Officer	Mongolia
18	IFAD	John McIntire	Associate Vice President	
19		Willem Bettink	Sr. Program Manager	
20	IFC	Cassandra Colbert	Resident Rep. Abidjan	Cote d'Ivoire
21		Manuel Moses	Country Manager	Kenya
22	PrSW/IFC	Brad Roberts	Sr. Operations Officer	
23		Laura Mecagni	Head, GAFSP Private Sector Window	
24		Yanni Chen	Results Measurement Specialist	
25	WFP	Damien Fontaine	Program Officer	
26		Edouard Nizeyimana	Sr. Program Advisor	
27		George Heymell	Director P4P, Policy/Program Div.	
28		Mahadevan Ramachandra	Deputy Dr. Procurement	
29		Sarah Gordon-Gibson	Country Director, Laos	Laos
30		Shanoo Saran	Procurement Division	
31		Tanuja Rastogi	Senior Policy Advisor	Steering Committee
32	World Bank	Abel Lufafa	Sr Agricultural Spec.	Kyrgyz Republic
33		Augusto Garcia	Sr. Operations Officer	Nicaragua
34		Charles Annor-Frempong	Sr. Rural Development Specialist	Mongolia
35		Kunduz Masykanova	Sr. Agriculture Economist	Kyrgyz Republic
36		Preeti Ahuja	Practice Manager/GFADR	
37		Teklu Tesfaye	Sr. Agriculture Specialist	Ethiopia
38		Valens Mwumvaneza	Sr. Rural Development Specialist	Rwanda (via VC)
39		Winston Dawes	Sr. Rural Development Specialist	Bhutan
40		Ziauddin Hyder	Sr. Nutritional Specialist	Uganda

41	World Bank Group	Anita Bhatia	Director/CDPDR
42		Raffaele Boldracchi	Sr. Operations Officer
43	Coordination Unit	Aira Htenas	Operations Officer
44		Anuja Kar	Economist
45		Dipti Thapa	Economist
46		Iftikhar Mostafa	Sr. Agriculture Economist
47		Kimberly Parent	Communications Assoc.
48		Natasha Hayward	Deputy Program Manager
49		Nichola Dyer	Program Manager





Knowledge Forum 2015 Agenda

Oval Room, IFAD Headquarters, Via Paolo di Dono, 44, Rome

Day 1: Wednesday, June 10

8.30-9.00 am	: Registration
9.00 am – 10.30 am	<p>SESSION 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Introduction of Participants : Welcome – <i>John McIntire, IFAD</i> : Overview of GAFSP – <i>Nichola Dyer, CU</i> : Life of a Smallholder Farmer – a multi-media presentation : Q&A
10.30 am	BREAK – CU Corner
11.00 am – 12.30 pm	<p>SESSION 2: GAFSP Capturing Results: Updating our M&E Framework– Chair: <i>Iftikhar Mostafa, CU</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : GAFSP monitoring and results reporting: an overview – <i>Natasha Hayward, CU</i> and <i>Yanni Chen, IFC</i> : Improving GAFSP Monitoring – process and proposals from M&E Working Group – <i>Natasha Hayward</i> : Discussion
12.30 pm	: LUNCH
2.00 pm – 3.30 pm	<p>SESSION 3: GAFSP Capturing Results - Refining our Indicators – Chair: <i>Natasha Hayward, CU</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : CU analysis on the Core Indicators – <i>Dipti Thapa, CU</i> : Sharing GAFSP Project experience – <i>Ethiopia (WB) and The Gambia (AfDB & FAO)</i> : Small Group working discussions: From 42 to 25 core indicators – what would you include? : Report back to Plenary
3.30 pm	BREAK – CU Corner
4.00 pm – 5.30 pm	<p>SESSION 4: GAFSP Capturing Results – Rapid Impact Evaluation– Chair: <i>Mahfuz Ahmed, ADB</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Approaches to ‘rapid’ impact evaluation – <i>Iftikhar Mostafa, CU</i> : Sharing GAFSP Project experience in rapid impact assessment: <i>Cambodia (ADB)</i> : Plenary Discussion



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DAY 2: Thursday, June 11

9.00 am	Welcome and Recap of Day 1 Proceedings – CU
9.15 am – 10.45 pm	<p>SESSION 5: Public-Private Partnerships for Smallholder Farmers – Chair : <i>Laura Mecagni, IFC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Experiences of GAFSP projects demonstrating public-private partnerships– <i>Country Managers</i> : Overcoming challenges for public-private engagement – <i>Brad Roberts, IFC</i> : Discussion
10.45 am	BREAK – CU Corner
11.15 am- 1.00 pm	<p>SESSION 6: GAFSP Operational Issues: Small Group Discussions – Chair: <i>Guy Evers, FAO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Breakouts (max 3): Possible topics – Projects with more than one Supervising Entity, In-depth Impact Evaluations, New projects: Getting started with GAFSP, GAFSP Missing Middle, Other topic in response to team leaders’ request : Report back to Plenary
1.00 pm	LUNCH
2.30 pm- 3.45 pm	<p>SESSION 7: The Value of GAFSP: Pathway from project to country level – Chair: <i>Preeti Ahuja, Practice Manager, The World Bank</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : GAFSP impact stories – <i>Bangladesh (FAO) and Rwanda (The World Bank)</i> : Breakouts: (a) Evidence of country impacts to support new funding for GAFSP; (b) How projects are capturing and communicating impact stories : Report back
3.45 pm	BREAK – CU Corner
4.15 pm – 5.00 pm	<p>SESSION 8: Moving Forward – Co-Chairs: <i>Nichola Dyer and John McIntire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Discussion
5.00pm	: Closing remarks – <i>Nichola Dyer, CU</i>
5.15 pm	: FORUM CLOSES

2015 GAFSP Knowledge Forum Survey Results

Session 1: Introduction (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	47.4	36.8	15.8	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	26.3	31.6	42.1	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	26.3	42.1	31.6	100
Overall rating	31.6	42.1	26.3	100

Session 2: GAFSP Capturing Results – Updating our M&E Framework (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	42.1	42.1	15.8	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	26.3	57.9	15.8	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	31.6	52.6	15.8	100
Overall rating	21.1	63.2	15.8	100

Session 3: GAFSP Capturing Results – Refining our Indicators (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	36.8	63.2	0.0	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	26.3	68.4	5.3	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	21.1	73.7	5.3	100
Overall rating	21.1	73.7	5.3	100

Session 4: GAFSP Capturing Results: Rapid Impact Evaluation (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Applicable	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	26.3	47.4	0.0	26	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	21.1	47.4	5.3	26	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	31.6	42.1	0.0	26	100
Overall rating	21.1	52.6	0.0	26	100

Session 5: Public-Private Partnerships for Smallholder farmers (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Applicable	Dissatisfied	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	27.3	59.1	9.1	4.5	0	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	22.7	59.1	13.6	4.5	0	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	13.6	68.2	9.1	4.5	4.5	100
Overall rating	22.7	59.1	13.6	4.5	0	100

Session 6: GAFSP Operational Issues (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	No Response	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	45.5	40.9	0.0	13.6	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	40.9	45.5	0.0	13.6	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	27.3	54.5	4.5	13.6	100
Overall rating	40.9	45.5	0.0	13.6	100

Session 7: The Value of GAFSP: Pathway from project to country level (% of the respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	No Response	Dissatisfied	Total Respondents
Relevance of presentations	22.7	59.1	0.0	18.2	0	100
Usefulness of lessons learnt in applying to GAFSP-specific activities	22.7	54.5	4.5	18.2	0	100
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	13.6	59.1	4.5	18.2	5	100
Overall rating	18.2	59.1	4.5	18.2	0	100

Session 8: Moving Forward (% of the respondents)

Session 8: Moving Forward	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	No response	Total Respondents
Clarification provided on key issues related to GAFSP	31.8	36.4	4.5	27.3	100.0
Clarity on the next steps	31.8	27.3	13.6	27.3	100.0
Overall rating	31.8	36.4	4.5	27.3	100.0

Overall:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	No response	Total Respondents
Opportunities for exchanging knowledge	31.8	45.5	0.0	22.7	100.0
Overall experience of the GAFSP knowledge Forum	40.9	36.4	0.0	22.7	100.0