

Grow Asia Digital Learning series hold third event on multi-stakeholder partnership

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Grow Asia is a multi-stakeholder partnership platform that catalyzes action on inclusive and sustainable agricultural development in South East Asia. Established by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, Grow Asia connects companies, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to help smallholder farmers improve their production and livelihood through access to information, knowledge, markets and finance. Its partnership with Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam has improved the agriculture status of smallholder farmers and pastoralist in these countries. Grow Asia collaborated with over 500 partners across these 5 countries reaching over 690,000 smallholders.

The Grow Asia Digital Learning Series brought together corporate leaders, AgriTech start-ups and ecosystem enabling emerging technologies to uncover opportunities for scalable, impactful digital solutions to improve sustainable food security

and income.

The third event of Grow Asia was a platform to showcase 10 projects proposals out of the SE-Asia region from the Netherlands Space Office (NSO) to share satellite technology applications in improving smallholder value chains. The NSO showcased their projects and learnings from their Geodata for Agriculture and Water (G₄AW) program.

The G₄AW Facility promotes and supports private investments for large scale, demand-driven and satellite-based information services for smallholders in developing countries. G₄AW mainly addresses food security by increasing the production volume and gives provision to safety new through index insurance and decreasing vulnerability to the natural disaster. Geodata, converted to relevant information on climate, weather and hazards can be used to generate information for customised and timely agricultural advice. The combination of improved smartphone mobile connectivity, new satellite services and private investments, offers the opportunity for scaling up innovations to large-scale implementation and operations.

Grow Asia enabled spokespersons from different disciplines to leverage each other's expertise and to share their insight from regional experiences. Depending on the local context and business insights, various types of business models were designed and deployed for providing information services. The proposed business models were based on cooperation, affordability, sustainability and empowerment in a local context, bridging the information chain from satellite to soil and space for food security.

The proposed digital solutions enable smallholder food producers to receive agrometeorological advice on pest and diseases control, water usage, drought warning, weather information, fertilizer application, market information, index insurance, sowing and planting, yield forecasts and also on financial / insurance products. Finer special resolution and more timely delivery of satellite data assist in better predictions.

The forum encouraged partnership to bridge the information chain from satellite data collection to smallholder. In response to the call for proposals of the G₄AW Facility, new partnerships alliances between technology companies, mobile services providers, government extension services, traders, companies that provide agricultural inputs, NGOs and farmers' organizations were highlighted. The viable business model emphasised on a complementary set of partnership that is locally embedded with existing infrastructure to lead as a business partner with a stake in taking the project results further into financially sustainable service.

An interactive Panel discussions involved a group of panellists'; Moderator and Senior advisor- Mr Ruud Grim from Netherland Space Office (NSO), Program Manager- Catalina Von Hildebrand from NpM (Platform for Inclusive Finance), Senior sales executive- Joseph Ow Yong from Planet (Earth-imaging satellites launchers), Leesa Soulodre from R3intell Ventures (early-stage venture capital firm), CEO- Rassarin from Listenfield (Precision technology and agricultural business solutions) addressed the challenges and possible improvisation in the proposed business models.

The 10 proposed models from different SE countries are as follows;

Bangladesh: GEOBIS-Geodata Based Information Services for smallholder farmers in Bangladesh; GEOPOTATO-Geodata to control potato late blight in Bangladesh; IDSS-Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) for Farmers.

Cambodia- Angkor SALAD-Geodata for sustainable vegetable farming

Indonesia- G4INDO –Geodata for upgrading smallholders' farming system in Indonesia; SMARTseeds-Information services for vegetable farmers in Indonesia; SpiceUP-GEodata for sustainable pepper farming

Myanmar- MYVAS4AGRI-Myanmar Mobile Value Added Services for Agriculture

Vietnam-GREENcoffee-Information services for coffee farmers in Vietnam; Sat4Rice-Satellite data for rice farmers in Vietnam