



Sasakawa Africa Association

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016

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INTRODUCTION

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) has worked for 25 years in agricultural extension and smallholder development in sub-Saharan Africa. It has been active in 14 countries and has improved the lives of several millions of smallholder farmers.

SAA has always had a very strong field and farmer orientation. Working with our main partners, national agricultural extension services, SAA has concentrated on introducing productivity-enhancing food crop technologies to increase yields and improve household incomes. The best synthesis of its mission was captured in Dr. Borlaug's dying appeal, "Take it to the farmer! "

In 1986, SAA set out to show that productivity-enhancing technology was available in Africa to double and triple yields over those obtained by farmers. Its focus was on maize, the most widely grown of the major food crops. The original thesis was amply validated in maize and a half dozen other major food crops. However, the package of recommended technologies, while not high-cost by standards in many countries, turned out to be beyond the economic reach of many farmers who participated in the extensively implement field demonstration programs. The reasons for non-adoption were many, but involved issues of risk, profitability and ability to purchase needed inputs. Because of these outcomes, SAA has adopted new technology transfer strategies, broadened the range of agricultural advisory services it offers, and restructured its own organization.

This strategic plan was developed through a consultative and participatory process within and outside the organization. Stakeholders, partners and SAA personnel contributed and voiced their opinions about future directions, options and opportunities for the organization. We have redefined our vision, mission and goals and given a more detailed outlook on what we seek to achieve within the next five years and how we envision accomplishing these goals. Finally, we estimate the resources we require and the strategy we will follow to mobilize the needed resources.

The strategic plan is SAA's road map to generate greater trust, support and impact from our work. However, we also recognize that we work in a changing environment, subject to a wide range of external influences that demand flexibility and adaptability. Thus, we remain open to change and to incorporating promising new ideas, innovations and inventions. Hence, we plan a mid-term revisit to the Strategic Plan in 2014 to revise and adapt it as necessary.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The SAA strategic planning exercise began in mid-2007, when we first entered into discussions with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) about the possibility of establishing a potentially large joint smallholder extension project. It was evident that sweeping changes in the way SAA operated would be necessary to consummate an agreement. Using a BMGF planning grant in 2008 and core-funding, SAA engaged in a series of consultations and planning meetings with representatives of ministry of agriculture extension organizations, private agribusinesses, university agriculture faculty and farmers' associations. National planning teams were constituted to help develop

the project and their plans were vetted at two national stakeholder meetings in each country. Local consultants were also retained to prepare impact studies of past capacity building efforts, conduct extension literature reviews, and provide strategy and design recommendations on gender, alternative suppliers of extension, and ME&L (monitoring, evaluation and learning). A draft project document was presented to the SAA Board in 2008 as a proposal and then in 2009 as a management plan. Out of this process came a new SAA organizational structure (Figure 1), made up of five thematic program areas and using a matrix system of management.

Because the number of potential clients is large and the cost of reaching them is high, and budgets have been inadequate, extension organizations in Africa have rationed advisory services, with preference given to larger, better endowed, and more innovative smallholder farmers. This has resulted in only 20-30 percent of only smallholder farmers, and only 5-10 percent of women farmers receiving training and technical backstopping. Extension has its maximum impact in the early stages of dissemination of new technologies, when the productivity differential and information gaps are the greatest (World Development Report 2008). These are frequently either women farmers or the relatively poorer farmers.

Smallholder farmer assets and production capabilities are not uniform. The poorest of smallholders have insufficient assets to sustain even a subsistence livelihood and lack other employment options, often due to poor health and illiteracy. These farmers are just 'hanging on' and require social safety nets and investments in children to provide the next generation with the livelihood options that are not available to their parents. There are also smallholders with insufficient physical assets to generate a reasonable livelihood, but who have the capabilities of health and education to enhance their livelihoods by 'moving out' of farming, at least partially, and participating in rural or urban labor markets. Then there are the relatively more affluent smallholders who have the human and physical assets to adopt a 'moving up' strategy of participating in agricultural value chains and generating a sustainable livelihood from farming.

Mechanization is also needed in smallholder agriculture, to reduce drudgery, improve speed and efficiency, and increase the quality of harvested crops. African governments have attempted to provide mechanized services through public service providers and through the provision of machinery to farmer-based organizations as concessionary loans or even outright grants. These programs have invariably failed, with the machinery being ruined in one-third or less of its expected useful life. Inappropriate equipment, poor maintenance, over use and preference given to politically connected farmers are some of the reasons for these failures. Yet the need is still there. Farmers need laborsaving technology, including access to farm machinery.

African agricultural policy makers must address the issue of an aging agricultural workforce in Africa and the growing trends of the youth to migrate to urban centers with few skill sets and job prospects. This is a fertile seedbed for social and political unrest. SAA's former Board member and President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, summarized the issue succinctly:

"As long as farming remains, at best, marginally rewarding, young men and women will drift away from the rural areas to increase the battalions of the urban poor. The idea, therefore, that African agriculture

should be based only on a half hectare holding is, to say the least, unappetizing. I want to see people encouraged. I want to see the evolution of young, emergent, commercial farmers who will be holding, not a half hectare of land, but 5 to 10 to 20 hectares of land, and for whom the city will have no big attraction."

Some very poor farmers, especially women, have insufficient physical assets to generate a reasonable livelihood. Those with adequate health and education must be assisted to at least partly 'move out' of farming and participate in rural labor markets. We will support these groups to establish viable agro-processing enterprises with as full an expression as possible of the value chain, with productivity and quality improvements in crop production, processing, and marketing.

To bring a value-chain perspective to smallholder agriculture, a major capacity building effort is needed to broaden and upgrade the skill sets of extension specialists and frontline agents. Both informal and formal training will be needed. Our sister organization, the Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE), is currently engaged in far-reaching curriculum reform with its College and University partners to introduce the value chain perspective in agricultural extension both in mid-career and pre-service extension courses of study. We also look to our SAFE co-workers and their university colleagues, to improve the quality of SAA training materials being used in our thematic areas for in-service training of extension workers and farmers.

Finally, an evidence-based organization needs a robust system to monitor, evaluate and learn from its activities, and use and share this information to guide decision-making and investments within the organization and beyond.

SAA: PAST AND PRESENT

Nobel Laureate Dr. Norman Borlaug, Japanese Philanthropist Ryoichi Sasakawa, and former US President Jimmy Carter founded the Sasakawa-Global 2000 African Agricultural Initiative. As a result of this partnership SAA was established in 1986 and led by Dr. Borlaug and the Global 2000 program was established, in the same year, by The Carter Center, with President Carter as its Chairman The Nippon Foundation¹, whose chairman was Ryoichi Sasakawa, funded all of SAA's agricultural work and much of the Global 2000 agricultural work as well. SG 2000 programs have worked in close collaboration with national agricultural extension services, improving their field operational effectiveness and strengthening their human capital. ² National governments have assigned thousands of frontline extension staff to participate in joint field programs and provided partial funding for joint field operations.

For much of its history, SAA has focused on improving crop productivity in staple food crops. While one blueprint did not fit the programs in all SG 2000 countries, there were

¹ The Nippon Foundation previously was known as the Japan Ship-building Industry Foundation (JSIF). Its name was changed to the Nippon Foundation in 1997.

² Through the SAFE program, more than 3,000 mid-career extension officers have participated in the SAFE-supported Diploma and BSc in agricultural extension degree programs between 1993 and 2011. This represents SAA's major contribution to institutional capacity building.

many similarities. All began with crop demonstration programs that rapidly ramped up to involve thousands of farmers. Input supply constraints were problematic in all countries and private agro-dealer networks were promoted wherever possible. In particular, strengthening smallholder seed supply was targeted.

By 2000, the issue of smallholder access to output markets was high on the SG 2000 agenda. Some successes were realized in organizing farmers to sell surplus grain collectively. However, a theory of change on what constituted linking farmers to markets and how to do it in a scalable and sustainable manner was not developed. Today, there is a better understanding that productivity-enhancing technology will not be adopted by most smallholder farmers, even if inputs are available, unless farmers capture more of the value addition that exists higher up on the value chain. To capture this added value, farmers need viable farmer-based organizations that can address postharvest and marketing issues and can engage a broader range of service providers and organizations, often from the private sector.

TECHNOLOGY INTERVENTIONS

Until recently, most extension crop demonstrations in Africa (including SG 2000's past work) have promoted standardized packages of technology, generally among relatively better off smallholders located mainly in less risky agro-ecologies and who have reasonably good access to markets. Extension services have generally recommended one technology package (two at the most) for each of the major food crops across most of the country.

The arguments for this "package" approach were several. Perhaps foremost, they rested on the significant interactions between various factors of production in yield outcomes. Timing of seeding, weeding and fertilizer applications all weighed significantly on achieving optimum yields from improved varieties. Standardized packages also simplified extension training and demonstration programs, since fewer variations were included. Because fertilizer recommendations were not set at the top of yield response curves, it was argued, packages were widely applicable. Yet research has shown that, when a standardized package is extended over diverse and risky environments, technical efficiency declines significantly.

The SG 2000 experience supports this conclusion. Even though overall demonstration plot yields averaged three to four times higher than national averages, the variation between the highest and lowest yielding plots was often three- to four-fold as well. A detailed crop cut analysis of a standardized maize package used in Mozambique, for example, revealed that only one-third of the demonstration plots were highly profitable. A third was considered marginally profitable, and a third was not profitable. Additional farmer field training might have shifted these results toward profitability, but still, there would have been a significant number of farmers for whom the recommended package was not suitable. Given the considerable agro-ecological and socio-economic diversity that characterizes smallholder agriculture in Africa, a greater array of technology options for farmers is needed to help ensure increased technical efficiency and productivity.

SPATIAL COVERAGE AND IMPACT

Since 1986, SG 2000 agricultural programs have been situated in 14 African countries.³ (In 2006, SAA made Ethiopia, Mali, northern Nigeria and Uganda its focus countries.) SG 2000 country programs have helped farmers to establish over 500,000 demonstration plots. Additionally, national governments have funded the inputs for more than three million production plots (ranging from 0.25 to 0.5 ha)⁴

During SAA's active periods in each SG 2000 country, production of the five staple crops: maize, rice, wheat, sorghum and millet increased by 21.5 million metric tons. About 25% of the added production was a result of productivity increases, brought about by the use of improved technologies such as fertilizer, improved seed and improved crop management, and timely planting. The value of these yield-induced increases at 2006 prices is estimated at US\$ 415 million annually (FAOSTAT & USDA Agricultural Statistics). It is difficult to apportion with certainty those changes associated to SAA interventions; however, SG 2000 and its partners have, over the years, played a significant role in catalyzing these changes especially in maize production and productivity.

There was widespread introduction of improved varieties with resistance to maize streak virus, in combination with improved crop management in Ghana, Benin, Togo and Nigeria. High-yielding maize hybrids were grown on more than 1 million ha in Ethiopia, Malawi and Nigeria. Further, SG 2000 also played a key role popularizing maize production in Mali and Burkina Faso. Introduction of early-maturing maize varieties more than doubled the area planted. SG 2000 also played a key role in the introduction of Quality Protein Maize (QPM) varieties on 700,000 ha in program countries.

The most significant impact among semi-arid crops has been yield gains in millet; accounting for about 17% of the total increase in millet production. This was due, in large part, to the widespread popularization of the improved SOSAT millet variety, especially in northern Nigeria. Progress in sorghum has been much slower, and most of the efforts to introduce high-yielding varieties have not been particularly successful. The exception was the introduction of the high-yielding Hageen Dura 1 hybrid in Sudan.

Rice, in particular, has been a growing priority for SG 2000 since the late 1990s. It was the focus crop in Guinea where SG 2000 played a pioneering role in the introduction of NERICA (New Rice for Africa) varieties developed by the Africa Rice Center (WARDA). In 2005, SAA established a Regional Rice Program, which worked aggressively to expand rice production in Nigeria, Mali and Uganda, and most recently in Ethiopia. Significant impacts have been achieved in all of these countries.

³ SG 2000 country programs: Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda. Zambia was operated only as a Global 2000 agricultural program.

⁴ Ethiopia is the national partner that has been most active in scaling up SG 2000 program strategies and interventions, with the number of demonstration/production plots in food crops involving more 2.5 million farmers.

Other SG 2000 interventions included backstopping dozens of small- and medium-private seed enterprises, helping hundreds of agro-input dealers to get established, providing postharvest handling and storage training to more than 50,000 farmers, helping more than 1,000 rural women to establish agro-processing enterprises, and helping more than 50,000 farmers to organize into formal associations as avenues for collective input acquisition, output marketing, access to credit, and enterprise development.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

In developing the SAA Strategic Plan, the analysis of opportunities and threats has been an important activity. In the simplest of terms, SAA needs to be prepared to deflect threats and seize opportunities. World agricultural history has been one of small producers being pushed off the farm to seek employment in industry and service sectors, and increasing consolidation of agricultural land into larger farms with fewer farmers and increasing mechanization. Will Africa's long-term path be any different?

Between 2010 and 2020, the UN Population Agency estimates that the population of the four SG 2000 focus countries will increase by 75 million people, growing from 290 to 365 million. In addition, by 2050, 60 percent of the total population will live in urban centers and only 30 percent will be engaged directly in agriculture. In preparing for this major demographic shift, many African governments, including those of the four SG 2000 focus countries, are making major land grants for large-scale mechanized agriculture and in giving investment priority to their breadbasket areas. They see the huge needs for more food in the coming years, and increasingly to feed an urbanized population, and they are betting on commercial agriculture to supply demand.

Market demand is another complicated issue. Increasingly we are seeing a growing demand in the cities for food imports over domestic production, e.g., consumption of Thai rice in Nigeria at a premium price of 60% over local rice. Thus, while the demand may be there overall, it may not be there for the quality of production delivered by the local market. This grain quality issue is a major one that local producers must come to grips with if they are to capture more of the urban consumer demand in their countries.

This clearly is an aspect of major concern and constitutes a point of facilitation by government and other players in the agriculture sector, including SAA.

Quantification or understanding of demand for technologies by farmers, as an opportunity, is also a complex issue. This is mainly due to the lack of clear relationship between farmer interest in an improved technology and their subsequent adoption of it. They like it but cannot get the key components, or cannot afford it with their own resources and do not have access to credit. Hence, there is often a big gap between the agronomic appropriateness of an improved technology and the practical appropriateness.

External Opportunities – A number of external opportunities exist for SAA. The most important ones include availability of proven technologies that are accessible and affordable, availability of donor funds, a conducive policy environment for smallholder development, growing commercial market demand, especially for quality products, improving market information services and communications technology (ICT) to access

it, growing investment in the rural and agricultural sectors, better recognition of need to pursue agriculture-led industrialization within Africa (e.g., CAADP), and the potential for smallholders to benefit more fully from growing food and other agricultural commodity value chains.

Other opportunities include growing project opportunities for NGOs as countries move toward multi-stakeholder service providers, strengthening farmers' organizations, which increase their capacity to articulate their needs, lower transaction costs, and achieve economies of scale. Further, there is a growing awareness to the economic benefits of mainstreaming of gender. Finally, there is a growing interest in the donor community to finance agricultural interventions that will help farmers in sub-Saharan Africa adapt to the likely adverse changes in climate and thus capitalize on emerging carbon credit markets.

External Threats – The threats include climate change, government policy shifts, political instability, unfavorable economic factors, weak national agricultural extension systems (NAES), rural-urban migration, limited access by farmers to credit and social and cultural barriers that affect the agricultural value chain.

Secondly, threats include competition for resources within the highly competitive market, high turnover of extension staff, poor input access and un-affordability, diseases and pests, dependency syndromes, low investment in research, rapid population growth and poor infrastructure. Other threats are unreliability of partners, dependency of SAA on national governments, spatial and technical duplicity by development agencies, land tenure and energy and power sources.

Finally, SAA needs to work on its theory of change strategy, including intervention exit and scaling-up strategies.

Internal Strengths—SAA has strengths that will help it achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. First is the SAA reputation. In every country where SAA has concluded its programs, it left with a very good reputation, and with an open door to return. This reputation begins with the farmers and the frontline extension staff and works its way high into government circles. Second, SAA has radically reformed itself such that, in principle, many of its past weaknesses will be strengthened and its past strengths in production technology and farmers' field orientation maintained. Third, it has had a committed donor for many years (Nippon Foundation) and proved it can attract new donors. Compared to the 2010 budget, program resources in 2012 will be 50 percent higher and by 2014, there is a high probability they will be 100 percent higher.

THE SAA VISION, MISSION, AND STRATEGIC GOALS

The new SAA vision, mission and strategic goals are summarized in Box 1. To achieve stated anticipated outcomes, SAA has developed several important inter-related and connected thematic areas, each with specific objectives to address what needs to be done to achieve the goals, and the anticipated outcomes. However, goals are incomplete without an overall vision to guide our efforts. Each of the themes addresses specific challenges of smallholder agriculture:

SAA can only achieve its impacts by improving the effectiveness of public agricultural extension systems to provide smallholder farmers with a range of appropriate technological options; building more resilient and effective research-extension-farmer-input supplier pipelines; and broadening and strengthening advisory services provided by private sector entities, NGOs, and farmers' organizations.

Box 1. SAA Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

SAA Vision

A more food-secure rural Africa with increasing numbers of prospering smallholder commercial farmers.

SAA Mission

To transform African extension advisory services in partner countries to assure greater family food security, and more profitable participation in commercial activities along the value chain, while respecting natural resources.

SAA Strategic Goals

1. Establish cost-effective farmer learning platforms that improve productivity in smallholder food systems, especially for resource-poor women farmers and those with low levels of technical efficiency, and increase food security and livelihoods.
2. Enable smallholder farmers to capture a larger proportion of the economic benefits inherent in agricultural food value chains.
3. Create Public-Private Partnerships that financially support delivery of extension services for enhanced smallholder agricultural development and enhance profitable market access.
4. Strengthen agricultural extension systems by building capacity of extension professionals and smallholder farmers to accelerate agricultural productivity and credit more competitive value chains.
5. Establish information and knowledge management information systems that enable adaptation, modification and change of technologies and approaches, improve efficiency and impacts, and communicate lessons and best practices for timely evidence-based decision-making.

TRANSFORMATIONAL THRUSTS

SAA has seven transformational thrusts that it intends to mainstream during the strategic planning period.

1. SAA is an evidence-based organization.
2. SAA programs, interventions and activities are measurable, scalable, and sustainable.
3. SAA follows a twin-track strategy to improve food security among resource-poor farmers, and increase income generation among commercially oriented smallholders.
4. In smallholder development work, SAA advances the fullest expression possible of crop value chains in smallholder agriculture development.

5. In food security work, SAA focuses on farmers previously marginalized from extension, with primary emphasis on women farmers.
6. SAA country crop menus focus on food crops with good caloric and/or nutritive value and relatively low perishability, and that of livestock focuses is on small ruminant livestock.
7. SAA emphasizes development of agricultural extension advisory services that are responsive to farmers' needs and demands and where farmers and their organizations assume responsibility for financing a portion of local operating expenses to assure greater sustainability.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Directing more extension resources towards serving underserved smallholder farmers who have low technical efficiency⁵ has the potential to achieve significant production and welfare improvements, and tends to, especially, benefit the lower tiers of the smallholder spectrum. These farmers require access to a greater range of technology options, combined with an enhanced capacity to select and adapt practices appropriate to their particular fields, seasonal conditions, and resource circumstances.

While almost all smallholders sell some output, the quantity is often far smaller than purchases at other times of the year. True self-sufficiency (i.e. no sales and no purchases) is rare. Most smallholders are net purchasers of the foods they produce, relying on proceeds from cash crops and off-farm employment to generate the income required to supplement crop production with market purchases. As a result, the welfare of many will be negatively impacted, not helped, by price increases in food grains. Thus, there is a need to help food-insecure farmers to produce more and become net sellers of grain. However, because of their precarious food balance situations, they are especially risk averse. Hence, it is likely that technology interventions that minimize the purchase of external inputs and rely more on locally generated sources of fertilizer and improved seeds will be the entry point for productivity enhancement.

There is often a high degree of concentration of output sales among a relatively small proportion of the producers. SAA seeks to help broaden such participation. Potential "net food sellers" will be assisted with training in crop productivity enhancement and postharvest handling to improve grain quality and reduce postharvest losses, with an eye on meeting market standards. Viable FBOs are essential for these farmers to be able to participate more fully and profitably in agricultural value chains attuned to market demand. They can help members obtain inputs, financing, and reduce transaction costs of market commerce to secure more favorable prices.

SAA also recognizes the need to develop smallholder development opportunities that

⁵ Technical efficiency is calculated as a fraction, with farmer yield as the numerator and the estimated potential economic yield (agronomic yield potential tempered by risk and other considerations) as the denominator.

appeal to rural youth. Our hypothesis is that smallholder youth opportunities will need to be oriented toward smallholder commercial agriculture and involve agribusiness opportunities, such as private service providers, agro-input dealers, and food processors. SAA has a menu of programs and activities that fall within this realm.

SAA also recognizes the importance of rural development efforts to generate more employment opportunities for smallholders with insufficient physical assets to generate a reasonable livelihood, but with the capabilities of health and education to work in rural labor markets. SAA seek to help smallholders to organize themselves into viable agro-processing enterprises that can efficiently produce quality food products demanded by the market. Our aim is to develop a scalable and sustainable enterprise model that can capture actors of entire value chains. It is our expectation that the youth will be involved in the chains as entrepreneurs and driving force in their communities.

SAA is committed to promoting the establishment of private service providers, with an emphasis on young farmer-entrepreneurs, who offer a range of mechanized postharvest handling and other farming services to other smallholder farmers to improve the efficiency of farm operations and the quality of farm outputs. The rationale for this component is two-fold: first, most smallholders lack sufficient land to justify purchasing such equipment for their own exclusive use, so there is excess capacity to sell to others. Second, group ownership of machinery is a path littered with spoiled equipment. Private ownership greatly improves the probability that engines and machinery will be properly operated and maintained. This activity has proven to be especially attractive to relatively young farmer entrepreneurs.

TARGET PARTICIPANTS AND ANTICIPATED IMPACT

Over the five-year period, SAA expects to impact about 400,000 farmers, 35 percent of them (140,000) who are women. (Depending upon feasibility studies, SAA may also adopt an explicit 'Youth' target as well.) These direct contact farmers represent households with an estimated total of 2.4 million members. In 2010, SAA's target areas in Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda had an estimated population of 45 million people, with an agriculturally active population of approximately 30 million people (and increasing at about 2.5% per annum). Therefore, even if we reach our target numbers, roughly 8 percent will be served, which should be a sufficient base for further scaling up and diffusion of benefits.

SAA has segmented its target participants into three sub-groups. The first group comprises 280,000 farmers, half of who are women, with low technical efficiency scores (0.5 or less) and who have not benefited from extension advisory services in the past. Our aim is to increase crop yields among these farmers by 50 percent, with an added average value of US\$100 and a total annual benefit of US\$ 28 million.

The second group comprises more commercially oriented smallholders (those with surplus production) willing to increase yields and adopt improved postharvest harvesting, handling and storage practices. Roughly 120,000 farmers fall into this beneficiary category. They will improve yields and grain quality such that they receive a 15-20 percent premium price for their surplus grain in the marketplace (principally cereals and grain legumes) and increase their net income by US\$ 200 per year, or \$24

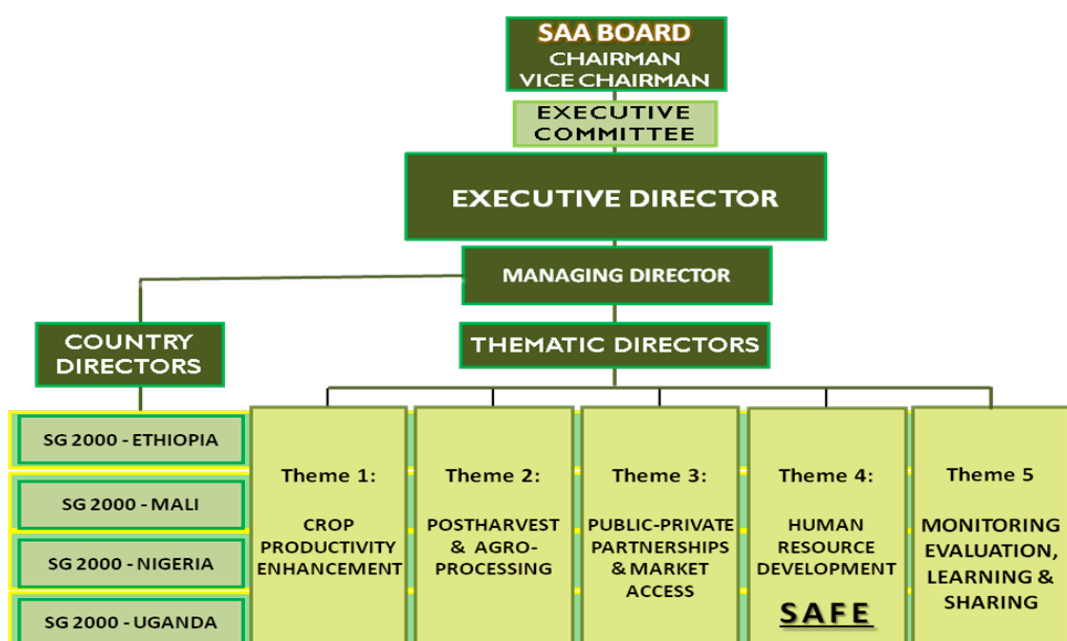
million total annual benefit.

The third group is of members of agro-processing enterprises, often women, with few resources, who dedicate their labor to adding value through food processing using productivity-enhancing technology and information and more successful marketing of the products produced by their enterprise, which will usually be a collective enterprise of some nature. SAA will work to achieve the fullest expression of the value chain with these participants (from field production to consumer sales). Expected net benefit per member will be US\$ 300 per year. A target of 4,000 participants is set, for a total annual benefit of US\$ 1.2 million.

SAA RESTRUCTURED

SAA has restructured itself, adopting a matrix management approach, which fits SAA well (Figure 1). SAA has five Thematic Directors (one of who is the SAFE MD) who lead planning, programming and capacity building for their respective areas. The five Thematic Directors and their corresponding Country teams work together to advance mutually agreed technical objectives, and the matrix structure provides for better technical quality assurance and the sharing of best practices. The four Country Directors drive the implementation of SG 2000 country programs.

Figure 1: SAA Matrix Management Structure



At the same time, the Country Directors have the option, in consultation with the Technical Directors and the senior management team, to tailor individualized programs of work that fit SG 2000 country needs and opportunities (e.g., terms of specific new projects).

To be effective, the matrix organization requires excellent vertical and horizontal communication, strong mutual respect and understanding between and among

thematic and country directors, and a *modus operandi* that is integrated and synergistic. In the new organization, there are two Executive Directors (EDs) – one for administration and finance and the other for programs –who work as co-Chief Executive Officers. The Managing Director is the Chief Operating Officer (COO). She supports the EDs, works closely with the Managing Director of SAFE in the area of human resource development, and provides oversight and coordination for five Thematic Directors and four Country Programs.

Five themes have been established and are listed below, with some major sub-divisions emerging within each theme. Theme 2 is likely to have two or three sub-divisions (postharvest handling, mechanized technology, and agro-processing); Theme 3 is moving toward two sub-divisions (private extension delivery support and linking farmers to viable agricultural markets); and Theme 1 could be sub-divided into crops and livestock.

Theme 1: Crop Productivity Enhancement

Theme 2: Postharvest Handling and Agro-processing

Theme 3: Public/Private Partnerships & Market Access

Theme 4: Human Resource Development

Theme 5: Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Sharing

PROGRAM THEMES AND LINKS TO GOALS

The five Themes align quite closely with the five goals stated in the Vision, Mission and Goals statement (Box 1, page 9).

1- Theme 1: Crop Productivity Enhancement

In 2010, SAA reached about 25,000 farmers directly through training and field demonstration activities, and a much higher number indirectly through information and knowledge spillover in the communities. About 18,000 farmers tested new technologies through their own investments. Over the period 2012-16, these numbers will increase significantly to 80,000 farmers annually.

Overall Objective –Increase agricultural productivity and strengthening capacities of farmers and national extension systems in the four focus countries.

Specific Objectives –

1. To assess productivity gaps and identify appropriate technologies to increase agricultural productivity, production and income, in sustainable ways.
2. To develop, adapt and refine capacity building and strengthening activities for the establishment of an efficient, cost-effective system of knowledge and skills generation and transfer for extension agents and farmers.
3. To develop, evaluate and implement specific extension approaches to integrate under-served smallholders and women farmers in agricultural extension systems.
4. To search, access, adapt and use new knowledge, skills and technologies to improve extension efforts and agricultural productivity, and communicate demands and challenges to the research sector and/or other relevant stakeholders.

5. To integrate crop productivity enhancement into the value chain approach of SAA to make use of synergies with the other themes to serve farmers more efficiently.
6. To contribute to evidence on the outputs and outcomes of our activities, document and communicate results and conclusions to partners, stakeholders and interested groups and institutions.

Anticipated Outcomes –

1. About 400,000 farmers benefit from T1 initiated extension activities. About 70% of these farmers are under-served farmers and at least 35% women farmers.
2. The use of improved agricultural technologies will, sustainably and cost-efficiently, improve agricultural productivity and output, increasing yields by more than 40%.
3. About 1,000 extension agents and community- based facilitators are trained on a yearly bases and a system of knowledge generation and sharing put in place.
4. Co-operation with international and national research centers increases the number of technological options at our disposal. Demand- driven research requests streamline technology generation and adoption.
5. High coordination and overlap between T2 postharvest handling and grain protection and crop productivity enhancement.
6. T1 contributes actively to achieve productivity enhancement in commercially sold grain, seeking top quality premium prices.
7. T1 assists agro-processing groups to add crop productivity enhancement to broaden their value chain and increase total income.
8. Activity reports and published articles give evidence of our work and achieved results, contributing to decision-making process and the development of extension models.

2- Theme 2: Postharvest and Agro-processing (PHAP) Extension

Postharvest handling includes quality harvesting, threshing, shelling, transporting and storing of farm products. This entails timely harvesting, application improved postharvest handling techniques, use of improved storage technologies, and use of pest-free storage facilities. Agro-processing involves adding value to primary products through grinding, extraction, cooking and/or fermenting, etc. The use of appropriate equipment and machines, improved processing technology, improved packaging and better transport tend to be capital-intensive that need off-farm labor and to operate in an enterprise context, e.g., a privately owned or cooperative business enterprise environment.

Overall Objective – To improve the postharvest handling, storage and processing of agricultural produce to reduce losses in order to increase income and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and agro-processors.

Specific Objectives –

1. To promote the use of appropriate postharvest handling and storage technologies that reduce losses, improve quality and food safety, and enhance smallholder farmers' food security and income.
2. To strengthen extension capacity to provide training in value-adding agro-processing technologies and promote off-farm rural enterprise development for resource-poor farmers, especially women.
3. To promote development of networks of private service providers to supply value adding mechanized services to farmers, as required, from planting to harvesting and agro-processing and farm-to-market transport.
4. To build and strengthen the capacity of private enterprises to supply and maintain recommended postharvest and agro-processing machinery and equipment, including drying and storage facilities.

Anticipate Outcomes –

1. 150,000 smallholder farmers reduce postharvest losses by 30 percent.
2. 60,000 commercially oriented farmers produce premium grain (grade one) and receive at least a 15 percent premium market price.
3. 4,000 women work-in off-farm agro-processing enterprises that improve quality and health attributes of products and increase income by \$200 per year.
4. 500 private service providers provide mechanized services to 40,000 farmers for harvesting, in-field transport, threshing, cleaning, drying, storage, and agro-processing and earning a net income of \$1,000 per year.

3- **Theme 3: Public-Private Partnerships for Extension Delivery & Improved Market**

Access (PPP&MA)

Partnerships have been critical to SAA strategies since the inception in 1986. A significant part of SAA approach in the host countries is to team up with ministries of agriculture in order to have access to the critical mass of front line staff required at grass-root level. More than 70 percent of those involved in SAA field activities are civil servants. However, agricultural development cannot be adequately addressed by public sector alone. There are opportunities for PPP &MA to broaden the scope and impact of agricultural extension and to strengthen the capacity for collective action by commercially oriented farmer associations to access and profitably engage in commercial markets.

Overall Objective –Establish public-private partnerships in support of extension delivery and smallholder agricultural development through more profitable access to markets.

Specific Objectives –

1. Develop revenue-generating models to make smallholder agricultural advisory services more scalable and sustainable. This includes enlisting farm input suppliers, agro-service providers, and farmer-based organizations (FBOs) to collaborate in financing smallholder agricultural extension advisory services.
2. Support the emergence of FBOs, capable of securing the needed information, inputs, credit, and scale to discover and access markets. This includes coaching FBOs to conduct market demand and value chain analysis and develop viable business development plans.
3. Organize and market specialized training courses in input supply, seed production, crop management and extension methods, on cost recovery basis, for private organizations in the seed, crop and agro-input sector.
4. Help broker new business opportunities for partner FBOs and entrepreneurs, especially, women and youth.
5. Facilitate commercial credit services for partner FBOs and entrepreneurs.
6. Support new business development activities for SAA projects.

Anticipated Outcomes –

1. Updated and expanding networks of private resources persons, agribusiness service providers, and advisors supporting efficient and effective FBOs and smallholder enterprises in training and program demonstrations.
2. At least 60 FBOs are supported through formal training and mentoring in market demand, value chain analysis and business planning, to capacitate them to engage in negotiations, securing services and commercial trading.
3. 70 private organizations dealing with seed, crop and agro-inputs receive specialized training at cost.
4. Producers' market alliances (for FBO & entrepreneurs) identified and supported.
5. Systems and channels to link private service providers and agro processing enterprises to financial institutions are well defined and known.
6. T3 participated and or take lead on 8 new SAA initiatives.

4- Theme 4: Human Resource Development⁶

Most extension workers begin careers with a weak grasp of agricultural science, little exposure to value chain concepts, and limited experience in extension communications. No more than 10 percent hold a BSc university degree or higher, another 15-20 percent has a higher diploma, and the rest hold a certificate or lower. The average age is over 40 (with the exception of Ethiopia, which has made a major effort to recruit young new extension workers). Most extension agents in SAA focus countries are men (80-90%), which, due to social and cultural barriers in many communities, limit their effectiveness in working with women farmers. Even if they achieve success at the field level, extension workers without university credentials are seldom able to rise to supervisory positions unless they receive advanced training.

SAFE has pursued a steady increase in the number of participating colleges and universities. During 2011-12, four new university programs (2 in Nigeria and 2 in Ethiopia) are being added, increasing the total number in SAA focus countries to 11. Some 1,400 mid-career extension agents in the four focus countries have participated in SAFE related degree programs. During 2012-2016, SAFE expects this number to increase to 3,676 graduates, with 15 percent being female, and another 5,130 enrolled, again 15 percent of them women.

Concerted efforts are needed to broaden skills of national extension staff and to increase the ranks of qualified women extension professionals. Embracing the 'value chain perspective' in extension should help in the recruitment of more women extension agents, since recruitment can also come from food technology, home economics, nutrition, and business development.

There is an increasing trend in many African countries—including Mali and Uganda among the SAA focus countries—to rely on community-based facilitators (some times called lead farmers) to serve as extension paraprofessionals, as the number of public sector extension workers decline. Only in Ethiopia is the number of extension workers increasing. This trend requires new strategies for training these paraprofessionals.

The shift away from the public provision of agricultural extension services towards more pluralistic systems that combine public financing with outsourcing arrangements involving private sector service delivery is changing employment prospects in agricultural extension. Private service provider companies and NGOs are likely to play bigger roles in providing extension advice to farmers in the future. This calls for innovations in training by universities such as distance, sandwich and on-line modes of instruction and education with agricultural value chain driven content.

⁶ SAFE lead SAA's Theme 4: Human Resource Development. It has developed a SAFE Strategic Plan for 2010-2020. The reader is referred to this document for added detail about the full range of programs and activities.

Upgrading formal credentials of early- and mid-career extension workers—in addition to hands-on in-service training—is a key component of the new SAA matrix. SAFE has accepted to provide leadership for the Human Resource Development Theme 4. SAFE will work to ensure that universities and colleges produce the right type and caliber of extension staff equipped to support expanded interventions by farmers along the value chain. The need for appropriate training materials for extension workers and farmers is especially great. Many of the professionals being recruited—in SAA and elsewhere—have good technical credentials but very little frontline extension experience. Thus they tend to copy from their university textbooks and produce training materials inappropriate for use at the field level. Experienced university faculty from departments of agricultural extension and many of the mid-career students in the SAFE programs can help to transform these sophisticated resource materials into ones that can be effective with frontline extension staff and farmers. SAFE will also help to coordinate develop of short courses and training modules to support SAA's fieldwork.

5- Theme 5: Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Sharing (MELS)

SAA is just beginning to engage in MELS work in a formalized way. The Nippon Foundation-supported CIMMYT Impact Assessment Project in Ethiopia and Uganda during 2006-2010 did make some inroads into introducing MELS into the SAA mindset, but there is still considerable work ahead. It will be important for the T5 groups to participate actively in *ex ante* needs assessment work by the different thematic and country groups and show a significant field presence. It is likely that a number of the extra-core donors will want to engage external impact assessment studies as well of the projects they fund.

Overall Objective –Establish a relevant, efficient and effective monitoring, evaluation, learning and sharing system to drive SAA's evidence-based programs.

Specific Objectives –

1. To promote and institutionalize monitoring, evaluation, learning and sharing, involving partners for evidence based reporting and impact assessment at SAA.
2. To assess and identify farmers', other target beneficiaries and partners' needs to prioritize SAA interventions.
3. To effectively and efficiently collect and use baseline data and information on SAA interventions.
4. To collect, analyze, use and report in a continuous and systematic manner, monitoring data and information from selected SAA intervention areas.
5. To develop and implement appropriate strategies for periodic internally and externally commissioned evaluations to assess performance - relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, and guide decision-making.
6. To develop and implement appropriate methodologies and tools to measure and assess SAA program(s) and project(s)' impacts on smallholder farmers, partners and agricultural development in the four focus countries.
7. To identify, capture, document and share good practices and lessons on SAA

interventions.

Anticipated Outcomes –

1. Functional MELS institutionally embraced throughout SAA.
2. Farmers', other target beneficiaries' and partners' needs and priorities identified and effectively addressed by SAA interventions.
3. Baselines survey data available for impact assessment in SAA intervention areas.
4. Monitoring information available in real-time for informed decision-making.
5. Understanding of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and impact and sustainability (if any) of SAA interventions (evaluations)
6. Best practices and lessons on interventions shared within SAA and with partners, stakeholders and investors.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

For most of SAA's history, a decentralized system of administration and finance was practiced. Each country director had substantial authority in setting administrative and personnel policies and, as long as they stayed within budget guidelines and satisfied external auditors, considerable freedom in how the annual budget was utilized. This style of management had some merits. It gave considerable flexibility of action to country directors and required a minimum of reporting to headquarters offices in Tokyo (to the Vice President for administration & finance) and in Mexico (to the SAA President Norman Borlaug who concerned himself mainly with program matters). However, over time, each country office became a kingdom unto itself in many respects and there were no uniform systems of management reporting, budgeting, and personnel policy. Again, the possibility for a major partnership with BMGF became an important part of the impetus to shift to a "one-firm" concept. Moreover, there was growing concern that SAA was increasingly out of sync with smallholder development learning. Thus, major reforms were undertaken in SAA management. Many have been largely completed and implemented. Some are still being finalized and have yet to be implemented.

HUMAN RESOURCE ADMINISTRATION

SAA staff has grown in leaps and bounds over the past four years. Personnel handbooks have been developed for three categories of staff: 1) international recruited staff, 2) regionally recruited staff, and 3) nationally recruited staff. Our approach to recruitment and promotions is based on a transparent, fair and competitive process. Our goal is to develop a motivated, competent professional staff with appropriate qualifications and requisite experiences in the themes and country programs.

SAA is making a concerted effort to be gender-sensitive. About 40 percent of our professional staff is female, a marked change from 2006 when only 5 percent was female. Today, SAA has one of the highest proportions of professional women staff in the NGO community in Africa. This will assure and ensure a better, deeper and wider reach to women farmers along the value chain.

A competitive, performance-based compensation system is in place for both international and national staff. It compares favorably with similar NGOs and international institutions. It also takes into consideration the market environment and inflation. At the same time, our performance management system allows for recognizing individual performance and excellence, at the same time, sanctioning non-performance.

Overall Objective – Foster learning and sharing culture within the organization to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of program goals and objectives.

Specific Objectives –

1. HR policy and procedure manual enforced.

This includes transparent system for recruitment, compensation, and promotion running throughout the organization

2. Enhance staff capacity building.

Thematic directors have major responsibility to implement systematic skill upgrading schemes for staff in their respective areas. This includes periodic group training sessions, individual mentoring, and using the annual staff retreat for crosscutting issues. In addition, the new Borlaug Staff Improvement Fund will co-finance with outstanding individual staff members formal degree training that will enhance staff performance.

Anticipated Outcomes – Good staff morale and retention of high-performing staff with adequate skills to meet SAA objectives.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS)

SAA is putting in place a comprehensive MIS based on all potential internal MIS users' needs for evidence-based decision-making and efficiency in SAA. This system is long overdue within SAA but processes have started to address this anomaly.

Overall Objective –To develop an enabling IT system for information sharing that will sustain MIS for both internal and external users.

Specific Objectives –

1. Revamp IT equipment & standardized emails addresses in all SAA offices.
2. Under the guidance of MIS expert mobilize all potential internal MIS users to articulate their MIS requirements

Anticipated Outcome – Cost-effective, user-friendly MIS capable of supporting evidence-based decision-making is operating in all SAA offices by March 2012.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

SAA has developed an enforceable standardized, transparent financial system that relies on properly and regularly submitted budgets, disbursements requests and financial reports to ensure and assure fiduciary obligations as per SAA guidelines and procedures. The specific objectives are as follows:

Specific Objectives –

1. Develop a Consolidated Budget 'Dashboard' (spreadsheets) that includes all core

and extra-core sources and uses of funds and allows supervisory directors (EDs, MD, TDs, and CDs) to see, allocate and use resources efficiently.

2. Ensure that core and project budget proposals, approved budgets, financial reports, and information for external auditors are handled according to the guidelines and procedures.
3. Ensure that quarterly budget requests are accompanied by corresponding disbursements and bank balance reports according to the rules and guidelines set by the management.
4. Develop a 2012-2016 budget to be used for general manpower and program planning and to guide resource mobilization activities.

Anticipated Outcome – A standardized, well-developed transparent financial system that relies on properly and regularly submitted budget, disbursement and financial and external audit reports is in place.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Throughout its 25-year history, SAA has enjoyed strong support of The Nippon Foundation (NF), Japan’s largest private philanthropic organization. Such long-term support is a rarity and has enabled SAA to focus on program implementation with consistency. However, funding levels have been relatively constant in recent years, and have even declined, in real terms over the past decade. This has limited the capacity of SAA (and SAFE) to scale up their work. Indeed, many partner NGOs, such as Winrock, IFDC, and TechnoServe, have more than tripled their funding levels over the past fifteen years.

In 2008, SAA launched a drive to diversify its funding sources and increase annual budgets by at least 50 percent by 2012 and 100% by 2014. It is on track to meet these targets. Despite the broadening of donor-funded activities, SAA is committed to maintaining the “One-Firm” Concept. SAA integrates different donor (investor) funding streams into one corporate program of work and within a consolidated budget scenario for efficient and effective resource use.

All SAA and SAFE staff—as well as the SAA/SAFE Board of Directors—has roles to play in raising and effectively using additional funds. The Board has oversight and fiduciary responsibilities, and provides general guidance for resource mobilization and expenditure. The Executive Directors provide strategic leadership, and work with the SAA and SAFE Managing Directors to cultivate possible funding opportunities. Country Directors have an important role to play since most extra-core funding is likely to be country specific. Thematic Directors help to ensure that quality in project proposals and operational costs are adequately covered; they may also draw on their respective professional networks to identify and help develop potential new sources of funds.

Ideally, each extra-core project should cover all its direct and indirect costs. A *modus operandi* will be instituted to ensure that this policy is followed as closely as possible.

SAA is focusing on five categories of potential investors:

1. *Private Foundations* – These institutions provide SAA its major sources of funding. So

far, SAA receives funding from the Nippon Foundation, BMGF and AGRA. Nippon Foundation funding is expected to remain during the 2012-16 planning period. With good performance with BMGF and AGRA, our funding could quite likely increase. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and the Syngenta Foundation and we intend to pursue these donors more aggressively. This category of donors is likely to provide 65-70 percent of SAA's funding by 2014.

2. *Official Development Assistance (ODA)*—Bilateral and multilateral ODA organizations are actual and potential funders to SAA. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is supporting two projects in Ethiopia, one for agro-processing enterprise development in women cooperatives, and another for rice value chain development in Ethiopia; a rice value chain development project has also been submitted to JICA for Uganda. SG 2000 Nigeria has participated in the USAID—Markets I Project in Nigeria. The Canadian International Development Agency has recently approved the CIMMYT - led project on highland quality protein maize (QPM) R&D program centered primarily in Ethiopia, in which SAA is the sub-contractor for the extension promotion component.

Multilateral donors include the World Food Program Purchase for Progress (P4P) program, operating in Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda, designed to improve smallholder farmer access to commercial grain markets. Good opportunities exist for developing smallholder extension programs that promote market-led, value chain enhancement. In addition, SAA is coordinating an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project, the Millet and Sorghum Initiative (Phase II) to expand commercial markets for value-added products in five Francophone West Africa countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mali and Senegal). This category of donors could account for 15-20 percent of SAA funding by 2014.

3. *National governments* – SAA is interested in earmarked financial support from its partner governments. So far, formal requests have been in Nigeria and Mali. In Nigeria, eight northern State Executive Governors in Nigeria agreed to provide additional support for local SG 2000 programs; MOUs have been signed with four states and two states – Jigawa and Adamawa – each have already paid their first installments. A formal proposal for counterpart funding has been submitted to the Government of Mali, and preliminary discussions were held with the new Minister of Agriculture in Uganda for similar program support. This category of donors is likely to provide 10-15 percent of SAA funding by 2014 and helps to provide an exit strategy for SAA.

4. *Private sector* – SAA previously gave considerable priority to developing partnerships with private agribusinesses, especially those involved in input supply. As part of the SG 2000 partnership, the Carter Center's Global 2000 program provided the secretariat for an Agribusiness Forum that involved participation by corporate officers and staff from Cargill, DuPont (Pioneer), Yara (formerly Norsk Hydro) Monsanto, and Syngenta (formerly Norvartis and Ciba Geigy). SAA seeks to reactivate collaboration with private agribusiness companies—large and small—by linking to their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, but following the Code of Ethics stipulated by the Board to ensure full transparency. This category of donors is not likely to provide more than 5% of SAA's funding.

5. *Farmers* – Agricultural extension is a labor-intensive and inherently costly activity.

While governments pay salaries, rarely do they allocate adequate operational funds, depending on donor funding to shoulder this responsibility. This leads to instability in the delivery of extension services that greatly limits effectiveness and impact. Hence, local extension offices need to work with farmers to develop a revenue-generating model that permits *in-situ* generation of income to cover local operating costs. The target extension revenue per farmer/beneficiary is US\$ 3-5/year. While not funding SAA directly, such local revenue-generation models will help ensure sustainability of recommended extension methods and interventions, and help provide an exit strategy for SAA.

INFORMATION SERVICES

For the last three years, SAA has concentrated energy and resources into soliciting grants from a number of new donors for an expanded program. These potential partnerships stimulated fundamental change within SAA and the organization is still in the midst of this transformation.

A defining moment also was the death of Dr. Borlaug. As one of the leading figures of the last century, his deeds, thoughts and achievements attracted high levels of quality publicity. Additionally, in the first two decade, major investments were made in annual high profile workshops in Africa and in a series of superbly produced films on a range of agricultural development issues, which were successfully offered to television stations across Africa. Despite its small size, SAA had a high profile in development circles, when the importance of agriculture in Africa was not well recognized. Today SAA faces an information vacuum, with the danger that it will be seen as a relatively small NGO of limited influence and with its best days behind it.

The new SAA strategy, with its new extension paradigm, concentration on women and other underserved smallholder farmers, a fuller an expression of the value chain, and the growing achievements of SAFE need to be well articulated and are likely to be recognized and appreciated. SAA is still seen as a pioneer in the quest for a green revolution in Africa—and its work is still well respected in a number of African countries, including the current focus countries.

SAA developed a communications strategy that was discussed first at the Board in 2009 and then at annual staff retreat in 2010. It was built upon continuing SAA's historical reliance in its communications work on external consultants. This decision is continuing in 2011, but in a less than complete form, and the pros and cons of 'in-house' versus 'out-sourced' talent are being reconsidered.

Overall Objective – A consistent organizational image that encapsulates the fundamental vision, goals and activities of the new SAA organization, and is resonant of Dr. Borlaug himself, his life's work and his legacy.

Specific Objectives –



1. Use *Feeding the Future*, the long-term title of the SAA newsletter, as the motto or slogan of the organization and insure that it appears in the mastheads of all published materials.
2. Produce a limited number of corporate publications (newsletter, annual report, special publications) in print and electronic formats.
3. Develop the strategic value of the new SAA website as an information tool and gateway to build the organization's public image and profile. The re-designed site requires active management, with a designated 'Webmaster' responsible for uploading new material and ensuring effective links to other relevant sites.
4. Develop and Implement a public information/awareness media strategy in each of the focus countries that is built upon evidenced-based results and primarily focuses on program outcomes in the four focus countries.
5. Support the planning and implementation of the Borlaug Symposium to be conducted in 2013 and subsequent symposia thereafter, in collaboration with senior management and the T5 MELS group.
6. Provide communications support to senior SAA staff asked to make presentations in key smallholder development forums about the work and progress of SAA and its partners, and the lessons we have learned with policy implications.

Anticipated Outcomes –The 'new' SAA will become an important NGO voice in decision-making circles with international organizations, donor agencies and the NGO community.